THE DISTREST WIFE,

OR THE

HISTORY

OF

ELIZA WYNDHAM;

RELATED

In a Journey from SALISBURY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MDCCLXVIII

THE DISTREST WIFE; OR THE HISTORY OF ELIZA WYNDHAM.

I Think—continued Mrs. Wyndham, (as ſoon as we were reſeated in the machine, where we had now room ſufficient, as the clergyman and the laſt fat lady had left us) I think I had got to that part of my ſtory, when we were overturn'd, where I and my Wyndham were ſet-

tled at Belverton, and happy ſhould we have been could we have continued there for life, but the viciſſitudes attendant on the human ſpecies prevented us.———

Laſt ſpring, my huſband was taken violently ill with the rheumatiſm, owing, I believe, to his ſedentary life, and continued very bad near three months; as the duty of his calling could not be carried on regularly, his day-ſcholars of courſe decreaſed, and our income was reduced entirely to the feoffees allowance, which ſtill had been ſufficient could we have continued to receive even that: but, unfortunately for us, the gentleman who firſt introduced

duced Mr. Wyndham, was dead, and another choſen in his room, who made a point of undoing whatever his predeceſſor had done, and had taken a particular diſlike to my huſband, on account of his having once contradicted him in an argument and proved him in the wrong.——He propoſed, therefore, at their next meeting, a new ſchool-maſter; alledging Mr. Wyndham's rheumatiſm was attended with a paralytic diſorder, which would totally diſable him ever more to teach writing, and our pay would be a dead charge on their hands. Theſe reaſons appear'd ſo plauſible, that they immediately appointed a ſucceſſor to Mr. Wynd-

ham; and ſent a note to my love, acquainting him with their determination, and deſiring us, as ſoon as convenient, to remove from the ſchool-houſe.———

This letter was brought while I was broiling a pidgeon, which I was in hopes Mr. Wyndham would eat.———

I immediately carry'd the paper to the bed-ſide; but, as he was in the moſt excruciating pain, and could not move, he deſired me to open it; and I had no ſooner read it, than I felt my ſpirits ſinking; which Mr. Wyndham perceiving, cry'd, ſmartly,———

" Courage,

" Courage, my love,—let us not
" deſpair;——though fortune ſeems
" to frown now on us, it will ſmile
" again:——we are not ſo diſtreſs'd
" as we were at Blandford—and I
" hope I ſhall ſoon recover my
" health, and find means to ſupport
" us in ſome other way."

My love's manner of ſpeaking, inſtantly reviv'd me; and I thought I felt a preſage his hopes would be accompliſh'd---flattering ideas!——deluding thoughts!——theſe hopes were vain.

Neither Mr. Wyndham or myſelf could eat any thing——he grew worſe; and I, affected with his illneſs and our ſituation, ſoon became

unable to give him any aſſiſtance, and was, in a very little time, a ſick partaker of his ſorrowful bed.———

Our ſituation was now truly melancholy;—unable to help ourſelves ——we could only bemoan each other; or gaze with ſilent grief upon our little innocent, and wiſh Heaven would take her before we died.———

A poor woman attended us for ſome days, and adding to our expences, our money was almoſt exhauſted; when Mr. Wyndham, who had not written to his father ſince we left London, reſolv'd once more to addreſs him, thinking the tale of our diſtreſs might awaken his affections to our

our relief; he accordingly, with much difficulty, as ſoon as he could be lifted up in bed, wrote,——

" Honour'd Sir,

" Dear father I would ſay, did I " not fear I might offend by uſing " that endearing appellation, per- " mit your ſon —— I was, ſir, " once your ſon —— your much- " lov'd ſon!——or if you will not " allow me that expreſſion, now, " permit poor Wyndham to lay his " unhappy circumſtances before you, " in hopes of an alleviation from " them, by you.

" I will not mention the circum- " ſtances relating to my marriage,

" only beg leave once again to aſ-
" ſure you, that wherever the miſ-
" take lay (occaſion'd by that letter,
" which, on my honour, I then
" thought your own) I and my Eli-
" za were innocent.

" As you charg'd me not to ſee
" you more, I have endeavour'd to
" obey you; but though I have not
" ſeen you, daily and hourly have
" been my poor petitions ſent to
" Heaven for your proſperity, and
" our being again receiv'd into your
" favour. Theſe three years have
" I waited for that happy moment
" without one complaint—and, did
" not diſtreſs compell me now to
" write, would yet be ſilent!

" During

" During the time I have been
" baniſh'd your preſence, I have la-
" bour'd for our ſupport, and yet
" have done nothing unworthy the
" name I have the honour to bear;
" but now, ſir, ſo it has pleaſed
" Providence,—— I am confined by
" a tedious and painful illneſs to my
" bed. My Eliza--my dear angel—
" for, O, ſir, allow me yet to ſay
" ſhe does deſerve that name—thro'
" her fatigue in attending me, now
" ſhares the ſame ſick pillow.

" Our caſh almoſt reduc'd ——
" want, cruel want before us, and
" diſtreſs around us, aggravated by
" our little-one,—(we have a child,
" ſir——a ſweet girl of two years
" old ——

" old —— named Amelia, after my
" dear dead mother!) ——by ſeeing
" her continually with the dreadful
" proſpect of leaving her an helpleſs
" orphan, open to the miſeries of
" this bad world, I need not ſay, adds
" to our pain; which is likewiſe en-
" creaſed by my poor wife's having
" ſeven months again gone with
" child.

" Under theſe accumulating diſ-
" treſſes—in this terrible ſituation—
" I preſume to addreſs you —— I
" intreat you as a man! I implore
" you as a ſon! I conjure you by the
" tender name of father to relieve
" our neceſſities inſtantly; or, if we
" ſhould die before that comes, to
" take

" take our infant-daughter under
" your protection: and, though
" her parents were unhappy in your
" displeasure, remember she is in-
" nocent and merits your regard.—
" For her sake, for my wife, myself,
" and, I must add, your own, thus
" humbly I address you. I hope
" you will not refuse my last request,
" and beg you will allow me to sub-
" scribe myself,

" Honour'd sir,

" Your ever obedient

" Son and servant,

" G. W.

" P. S. A letter directed to me,
" at Belverton, near Wilton, will
" come safe."

This

This letter never reached Sir George, but was fatally for us intercepted by his Lady (as I was acquainted yeſterday) whereby ſhe knew our reſidence, and was enabled to complete, what ſhe had ſo ſucceſſfully begun, our deſtruction.

We waited ſome time in eager expectation of a favourable anſwer; but none coming, we gave up all hopes of ſuccour from Sir George, and though my health was in ſome meaſure reſtored, yet as my dear huſband continued very bad, and our money was now reduced to the laſt guinea, our cares were no whit leſſened.

The trades-people, for a few days, ſupply'd our neceſſities on credit, but finding no likelihood of repayment they ſoon ſtop'd their hands; and the overſeers of the poor, thinking we ſhould ſoon become chargeable to the pariſh, ſent to let us know, if we did not in ten days remove, they ſhould be under a neceſſity of taking Mr. Wyndham before a magiſtrate, to ſwear to his laſt legal ſettlement; to which they ſhou'd immediately after remove us. ———

Mr. Wyndham, on the receipt of this news, ſeemed to ſtagger, for the firſt time, in his reliance on providence. ——

" Can

" Can there be a providence that
" ſuperintends this nether world?
" —— Why then are its bleſſings
" and curſes diſtributed with ſo un-
" even a hand? — why ſhould ſome
" who live in open defiance of all
" laws both human and divine, poſ-
" ſeſs a double ſhare of affluence and
" eaſe; when others, who would
" wiſh to mend the human race, and
" thankfully adore their great Crea-
" tor, are not only denied even com-
" mon neceſſaries but loaded with un-
" common want? —Forbear the im-
" pious thought!—ſhall I arraign the
" Almighty at my barr? — forbid it
" heaven, and let me know, in what
" ſoever ſituation I may be that——

" Bold

" Bold is the wretch and blaſphemous the
" man,
" Who being finite would attempt to ſcan,
" The works of him that's infinitely wiſe,
" And what he cannot comprehend denies.

I uſed my utmoſt endeavours to ſolace him, when I had great reaſon of comfort myſelf.

We ſpent a very uneaſy night—and going out the next morning to change the laſt poor ſolitary ſhilling, (leaving my huſband in bed) I was accoſted by a ſervant in livery, who deſired to know whether Mr. Wyndham was at home. I acquainted him, ——he then ſaid, he had ſome money to pay him, —— I inſtantly turned back to my Wyndham, —— and embracing him, as he lay wetting his

his face with my tears, cried out,— " Our prayers are heard, my life, " our miſeries are at an end,— here " is a ſervant below,— waiting with " ſome money for you." — " Kind " heaven," replied Mr. Wyndham " I thank you ! —— thank you not " only for myſelf, not only for my " wife and child, but that thou haſt " ſoftened my dear father's heart, " and reſtored him to humanity; " continue to multiply thy bleſſings " on his aged head, and let his " latter days be peace and joy."— (Then turning to me) " Where is " the perſon ? — ſhew him up my love" on the ſervant's entrance, Mr. Wyndham began (for as the feet

curtains

curtains were close, he could not see his livery.) "You are come from "Sir George Wyndham; I hope my "father is well?"———

"Sir,—(return'd the footman, he-"sitating, and seemingly affected,) "No, Sir,———I come from Mr. "Jefferys,——please to read that "note?" (giving one into my husband's hand) who replyed, (looking fondly full of pity up to me) ———"O, my Eliza, are then my "too fond wishes vain?—— do, my "love, read it,——I cannot!"

I opened it accordingly, and began;

"SIR

"To relieve, as far as in our pow-
"er, the diſtreſſes of the afflicted,
"is undoubtedly an incumbent du-
"ty: —— as I happily poſſeſs this
"knowledge, with means to put it
"into execution, I have, hearing of
"your misfortunes, taken the liberty
"of ſending you by the bearer, ten
"guineas, as an immediate ſupply,
"and ſhall repeat the ſame, while
"you may have occaſion for pecu-
"niary aſſiſtance; which I hope will
"not be long: as I am well acquaint-
"ed with your family, and ſituati-
"on, I will not affront you with
"the trifling ſum as a gift, there-
"fore you will pleaſe to ſubſcribe

"the

" the underwritten note; which at
" ſome convenient time hereafter,
" you may, if you pleaſe repay,
" and cancel the obligation; and I
" ſhall, in the mean time, by your
" aſſignment, be aſcertained of the
" fidelity of my ſervant,

I am, ſir,
Yours, very ſincerely,
T. JEFFERYS.

Auguſt, 20, 1767.

" I promiſe to pay T. Jefferys,
" or bearer, ten guineas for value
" received."

Mr. Wyndham, with much difficulty, wrote his name in the blank ſpace of the note, left on purpoſe:

and, thinking a written anſwer would be more reſpectful than a verbal one, deſired me to write.

"SIR,

"Not to acknowledge your kind "favour in the moſt cordial manner, "would be ingrateful to the laſt "degree. I, therefore, in the ſin- "cereſt manner return you my "heart-felt thanks, for your gene- "rous preſent— (for in that light I "muſt regard it) and though it may "be in my power ſometime to pay "you otherways than (I can now) "merely by expreſſing how much "beholden I am, though entirely "unknown to Mr. Jefferys, I ſhall

"ever

"ever eſteem it with the regard it
"merits.

"My illneſs incapacitates me from
"writing myſelf, and I am obliged
"for an amanſuenſis to my dear
"wife, who, as ſhe has ſhared my
"afflictions, deſires her thanks may
"be join'd with thoſe of,

"Dear ſir,

"Your much obliged

"Humble ſervant,

Belverton,
Aug. 20, 1767.

"WYNDHAM."

I encloſed the other note in this, and, ſealing it, gave it the ſervant, who told the money on a table and

went away; leaving us with hearts as light, as though ten guineas had put us beyond the reach of future calamity.——

I now proceeded where I was going when the ſervant came, but alter'd my mind as to what I ſhould purchaſe: for, as I before could not have exceeded three-pence for a bit of mutton for broth; I now bought a chicken, which coſt eight-pence, for the ſame occaſion, and was pleaſed, when I had dreſs'd it, that Mr. Wyndham and my little Emily eat heartily.——

Next morning I diſcharg'd the debts we had contracted, and could perceive an alteration in the counte-

nance

nance of every one, when I came out, from what they wore when I went into their houſes.———

As we had a ſufficiency left to convey us to town, (where we were ſure, if Mrs. Fletcher was yet alive, we had a ſafe aſylum, at leaſt, for the preſent) Mr. Wyndham thought, if he could bear the fatigue of travelling, it would be our beſt method to take, rather than ſtay at Belverton, and put it into the power of the overſeers to uſe us with their petty inſolence of office.———

Having taken this reſolution, we accordingly inform'd them of our intentions, who ſeem'd mightily

pleaſed thereat; and we began to prepare for our journey.——

The morning of our intended departure, having previouſly engaged a chaiſe for our conveyance to Saliſbury, and wrapt up Mr. Wyndham as well as I could; juſt as we were ready to go, two hard-favour'd men came and enquired very abruptly for him; and, being admitted, told him they had a writ againſt him.—

My huſband ſaid, that was impoſſible.—One of them reply'd,—"Is "your name George Wyndham?" He anſwer'd,—— then return'd one of the fellows,—— "'Tis all my "eye, ſmack ſmooth——you muſt "not come Captain Hummums over "us——

"us"——and laid hold of my huſband's collar as he ſat.———

As I did not underſtand either the language of the man, or his buſineſs, I was terribly frightned; and beg'd he would not uſe us ill —— he ſaid, he did not want to uſe any body ill; but when he was told it was an impoſſibility, what he knew to be true, it muſt make him act with ſecurity —"for, here (pulling a ſmall piece "of parchment out of his pocket) "is, I tell you, a writ againſt "George Wyndham, at the ſuit of "Thomas Jefferys, Eſq; for the ſum "of ten guineas."

"There muſt be ſome miſtake — "(reſumed my huſband) for a gen-

"tleman,

" tleman, who could ſo generouſly
" relieve me with the loan of that
" ſum but laſt week, cannot be ſo
" meanly cruel to ſport with my
" miſery, in plunging me into deep-
" er diſtreſs, by demanding what he
" knows it is abſolutely out of my
" power to perform — repayment of
" it, in ſo ſhort a time!"

" Oh, ho (return'd the bailiff, for
" ſuch we now found him) you do
" owe him the money, then——well,
" that's open, however; for not above
" one in an hundred that I ever
" touch'd, would confeſs that at firſt,
" though the other ninety nine were
" convinc'd of it before we parted.—
" Therefore, ſir, if you pleaſe, you
" may

" may ſend for bail——I have got
" ſome blank-bonds in my pocket,
" and will fill them up immediate-
" ly."

" Sir! (reply'd Mr. Wyndham)
" I know no one in the world who
" would be bound for me in half
" the ſum."

" Can you diſcharge the debt?"

" I told you, no, before."

" Will you then go to my houſe,
" for ſome days, till the matter may
" be made up? —— you ſhall be
" as well treated as at any tavern in
" London, and at as eaſy an ex-
" pence."

Mr.

Mr. Wyndham ſaid, any expence at all, would but ill ſuit the circumſtances of ſo very poor a man.—

"Well then, (reply'd the officer) "you muſt go to Fiſherton; and "that chaiſe which was intended to "carry you to Saliſbury (as I am "inform'd) may as well drop you "on this ſide the water.—My miſ-"treſs I have no buſineſs with—ſhe "may ſtay here, if ſhe chooſes."

Stay here, cry'd I in agony!—What, part with my dear Wyndham—let my ſoul's poſſeſſor go to priſon, and I not ſhare his confinement?—Curſe the thought—and, dropping on my knees by Mr. Wyndham's ſide, claſping him round his

his aching limbs, continued——No, my life; as we are one, our fate muſt be the ſame.—— Then riſing, I turn'd to the men: Come, then; if he muſt go, I go too; and my ſweet child ſhall bear us company.——

Mr. Wyndham look'd tenderly upon me and his child, and only ſaid, "bleſs ye both——unhappy "wretch!"

The bailiff, after about half a minute's pauſe, damn'd this whining; and ſaid, he did not know what was the matter with him — he never felt himſelf ſo all over before; and wiſh'd he might go to hell if he was not ſorry to carry a man to goal.——"But,

"come,

" come, (he continued) we loſe " time.----Are you ready ?"

" Whenever you pleaſe, (reply'd " my huſband) but muſt beg your " aſſiſtance to the carriage, for I " am unable to ſtand." —— They accordingly ſupported him to the chaiſe, while I with Emily in one hand, and a bundle in my other, followed with care-depreſſed ſpirits, my much afflicted, more lov'd Wyndham.

The men got up behind, and as the boy drove very ſlow, for my huſband's greater eaſe, it was afternoon before we arrived at the priſon; the ſight of the dreadful gates of which, put me in ſuch agitation, that

that I required as much aſſiſtance as Mr. Wyndham.

We were led into the kitchen, among a company of the moſt miſerable wretches eyes ever beheld; ſome ſwearing, others ſmoaking, ſome drinking, ſinging, and quarrelling, which with the ratling of their irons, made a din horrid beyond deſcription.

Overcome by the wretchedneſs of the place, my remaining ſpirits left me, and I fell lifeleſs at Mr. Wyndham's feet; during my inſenſibility, we were conveyed to a private room, and when I recover'd, found myſelf on a poor bed with my child, by the ſide of my ſick huſband.——

Who

Who can paint my deſpair at our ſad ſituation? my huſband ill, deprived of liberty, without any hopes of recovering that ineſtimable jewel! my child weeping for hunger!—myſelf very weak, and within a month of lying in!—— without neceſſaries or money to provide them!—in a place, than which the infernal regions can be only worſe, and filled with almoſt as vile inhabitants.

Theſe dreadful ideas diſtracted me, and had not Mr. Wyndham urged me with every powerful argument againſt it, I had certainly——Down the ſhocking recollection! and let me adore that merciful Being, that wou'd not ſuffer me to be eternal-

ly

ly miſerable, by ruſhing headlong into his preſence.——

The next morning we were waited on by the keeper, who contrary to my fears, and beyond my utmoſt hope, proved very kind; he enquired whether we wou'd diet with him, or by ourſelves, and being told our ſorrowful tale, and that we had no more than three guineas, and without any proſpect of a ſupply, he ſaid that ſhould make no odds, for as he perceived ſomething in us ſuperior to the claſs generally under his care, and the debt not being large, if the creditor did not ſoon give Mr. Wyndham his diſcharge, he

hoped he ſhould be able to collect a ſufficiency from ſome worthy inhabitants of the town, who often do ſuch things, to ſet us free without; and, in the mean time, we ſhould be welcome to eat and drink with him.——

I thank'd him on my knees; and wondred that humanity, which is ſometimes excluded palaces, ſhould ever be found in a priſon.——

The keeper being inform'd Mr. Wyndham's diſorder was the rheumatiſm, acquainted us he had been troubled with it very much, ſometime ſince, himſelf; but a perſon whoſe misfortunes had brought into his cuſtody, had given him a bottle

of

of drops; half which had adminiſter'd a cure, and the remaining half was at my huſband's ſervice; who accordingly accepted it, and which in two days had ſo good an effect, that he who had ſo long been helpleſs could walk tolerably well.——

The recovery of his health, which was dearer than my own, ſoon reeſtabliſh'd mine; and as I now thought I could gain ſomething to help ſupport us by taking in plain-work, I apply'd for that purpoſe to the keeper's wife, who promiſed to procure ſome for me.——

As I was one day walking in the priſon-yard, holding Mr. Wyndham's arm, a perſon dreſt in a clergyman's caſſock under his coat, whoſe ſilver'd head proclaim'd him on the verge of life, was brought in; and enquiring what misfortune could have been the occaſion of his being there, he reply'd———

"Murder, madam — in wretch-
"ed me, you now behold a mur-
"derer!——Poor Louiſa!——ſtill
"more wretched father!" Here he ſtopp'd; and the man who had brought him in letting him go, he fell through weakneſs on the ground —— I and Mr. Wyndham rais'd him——he thank'd us for our care;

care; but he felt himſelf dying, and all aſſiſtance was in vain.———

The turnkey attended to put him on a heavy pair of fetters, but, on ſeeing his weakneſs, forbore and went up ſtairs to ſhew him an apartment, whither we conducted him and laid him on the bed.—He turn'd to my huſband, and ſaid he had a favour to beg, which he hop'd he would not refuſe, which was, to write to his wretched wife an account of his death: to induce him to which, it was neceſſary to inform him of the melancholy occaſion.———

"I am, ſir," continued the poor man, (often interrupted by his weakneſs) "Curate of Halſtead in

" Glouceſterſhire—my name is Ver-
" non — I have been married many
" years, and have one ſon, who is
" now ſervitor at Oxford, who will
" next term take his degree; and
" had one daughter, who, if I did not
" regard her with a father's too par-
" tial fondneſs, was moſt lovely both
" in perſon and mind.

" I gave her the beſt education in
" my power; and when ſhe was ſix-
" teen, as I was unable to give her
" any fortune, I ſent her to London,
" to be inſtructed in the millenery-
" way, by one Mrs. Ledyard, a
" woman of great buſineſs and un-
" blemiſh'd character, as we were in-
" form'd, and recommended to by
" my

" my Lord Melford, who lives near
" me, and has long promis'd me the
" firſt living in his gift.

" She had been gone from me a-
" bout two months, when I receiv'd
" a letter from Lord Melford, ac-
" quainting me my daughter had
" made an elopement with one Wat-
" ſon, an officer of marines, a young
" fellow of profligate principles and
" abandon'd morals.

" This news cut me to the ſoul—
" and I immediately ſet out for Lon-
" don, in hopes of recovering my
" loſt child.

" On my reaching the capital, I
" applied firſt to Lord Melford's,
" where they told me his lordſhip

" was out of town; I then went to
" Mrs. Ledyard, who gave me no
" farther information, than that
" Watſon's mother liv'd in Beaufort-
" buildings, who perhaps knew more
" of the affair than ſhe.

" On my going there, and entring
" her parlour, I acquainted her my
" name was Vernon.——Then, ſir,
" ſhe reply'd, too well I knew your
" dreadful buſineſs ----it has already
" given me many uneaſy hours.

" I return'd, I dare ſay it muſt;
" as I ſee you have two fine young
" ladies grown up.—But, can you,
" madam, give me any account of
" my poor girl —— my loſt Lou-
" iſa?

" All

" All I can ſay ſir is, I believe " ſhe is at Portſmouth. The Royal " Chaſe, which ſhip my ſon's com- " pany is now on board lies there.---I " interrupted her with I thank you " madam; thither, as faſt as my old " feet can carry me, I'll go, and " hope I ſhall not be too late to " ſave my unhappy child from utter " ruin."

" I accordingly left London and " the third day arrived at Portſ- " mouth, where enquiring imme- " diately for the ſhip, was told ſhe " had been three weeks on a cruiſe, " but was expected back the firſt " fair wind. I waited three days " with the utmoſt impatience, as

" my

" my money began to run ſhort,
" but I could not think of leaving
" the place while I had any hopes
" of tidings of my daughter.

" On the fourth in the afternoon
" as I was walking on the Point, gaz-
" ing with eager expectations on the
" ſea, a company of poor ragged
" wretches ſeemed to be inſult-
" ing one more wretched than the
" reſt; I, moved by pity, deſired
" them to deſiſt, and they immedi-
" ately turn'd on me, and began
" to ſwear moſt horridly; when
" the poor creature, whoſe hair
" was quite diſhevell'd, and her
" face ſtreaming with blood, en-
" deavouring to riſe, and looking

" up

" up to me, ſhrieked out——my
" father!——and fell again on the
" ground.

" I ſtoop'd down, and beheld with
" horror pity and amazement, in
" her disfigured features, the face of
" my poor loſt undone Louiſa.

" I knelt by the dear victim,
" (for the vile wretches hearing
" her call me father inſtantly fled)
" in ſtupid terror, till ſome per-
" ſons whoſe boſoms were not proof
" againſt humanity, raiſed me and
" my unhappy daughter, and con-
" vey'd us to a public houſe: where
" after a long time, my child a-
" gain revived.—We lay there
" that night, and the next morn-
" ing

" ing, tho' ſhe continued very ill,
" ſhe was able to acquaint me
" with her unhappy ſtory which
" ſhe related thus ——

" When ſhe arrived at Mrs. Led-
" yard's, who was an infamous pro-
" cureſs, ſhe was treated extreme-
" ly well for ſome time, till one
" day Lord Melford came in, and
" uſing ſome freedoms ſhe begg'd
" him to deſiſt; but he being elevat-
" ed with liquor, inſtead of comply-
" ing with her requeſt, proceeded
" to greater—— when ſhe ſtruggling
" and calling for help, brought
" Mrs. Ledyard into the room,
" who ſaid Louiſa was a fooliſh
" girl—that if ſhe ſubmitted to my
" Lord's

" Lord's deſire, he would be a friend
" to her, but if ſhe refuſed, it
" ſhould be worſe for her.

" My Lord, who had not pro-
" ceeded ſo far in wickedneſs, bade
" Mrs. Ledyard hold her tongue,
" ———that he hoped my child
" would in time conſent to his em-
" braces, and he would not at pre-
" ſent force her inclinations.———
" So ſaying, he left the room, and
" Mrs. Ledyard, locking the door
" followed him——Louiſa ſaw no-
" body till the next afternoon, when
" Mrs. Ledyard entered, quite in-
" toxicated with liquor, and aſked
" her if ſhe had thought better of
" what ſhe had ſaid about my Lord
" yeſter-

" yeſterday; and on my daugh-
" ters declaring her abhorrence of
" the propoſal, and her reſolution
" rather to die than to forfeit her
" virtue, ſhe ſwore if ſhe con-
" tinued in the ſame mind four
" and twenty hours longer, ſhe
" ſhould ſleep next night in a goal,
" and again left her.

" Next morning ſhe applyed to her
" once more, and finding her perſeve-
" rance too great to be prevailed on
" without force, ſhe, according to
" what ſhe had ſaid the day before,
" arreſted her for fourteen pounds,
" hoping by that contrivance ſhe
" ſhould frighten her to comply
" with their diabolical intentions.—

" Louiſa

" Louiſa continuing inflexible
" to either threats or promiſes,
" ſhe was carried to the officer's
" houſe, where ſhe was met unfor-
" tunately by Watſon, who had
" been there to ſee a friend, and
" who hearing her diſtreſs paid the
" pretended debt and coſts, and
" took her away with him.———
" As Louiſa had no friend in town,
" I hardly can blame her for this
" unhappy ſtep; he carried her to
" an acquaintance's houſe, and de-
" ſired ſhe might ſtay that night,
" and next day he would acquaint
" her father with the affair.———

" He the next morning, call'd on
" Mrs. Ledyard, and told her he

" was

" was well acquainted with all her
" villainous proceedings, and ſhould
" immediately inform Mr. Vernon
" thereof.——She laugh'd at him—
" told him ſhe knew where Louiſa
" was--that ſhe would have her again
" in her houſe, and, in ſpite of him,
" would turn the tables on himſelf---
" that ſhe was not to learn his name
" or character, for the bailiff laſt
" night had inform'd her of all.

" Watſon immediately return'd to
" my daughter, and told her what
" he had heard; adding, I make no
" doubt the wretch Ledyard will
" ſoon acquaint Lord Melford with
" your being in this place, and you
" will again be in their power, if I

" leave

" leave you here, which I cannot
" bear the thoughts of: Therefore,
" as I have receiv'd orders to go in-
" ſtantly to my ſhip at Spithead, if
" you will permit me to accompany
" you, I will ſee you ſo far on
" your way, for it is not much
" out of your road, and provide a
" chaiſe for you the remainder of the
" journey home; where, if you will
" not refuſe me the honor, I will,
" when I return, myſelf attend, and
" beg you to accept him for your
" huſband, who is now your deli-
" verer, and who hopes alſo for the
" auſpices of your venerable parents.

" Louiſa told me her grate-
" ful heart could not help bound-

" ing with joy at the latter part of his
" ſpeech; in gratitude for his gener-
" ous act, which together with no
" diſlike to a genteel ſenſible young
" man, work'd ſtrongly in his fa-
" vour. She therefore only anſwer'd
" him by ſaying, her parents, ſhe
" was very ſure, would be happy
" to return him thanks for the great
" obligation he had laid them under
" to him, by his care of her.

" It was now about twelve o'clock,
" and Watſon ſent to order a chaiſe,
" which coming preſently they got
" in, and about ten the ſame night
" reached Portſmouth.

" As

" As it was ſo late before they had
" finiſhed their journey, he ſaid they
" could not do better than lay at the
" inn, and he the next morning wou'd
" ſettle their further progreſs; my
" unhappy daughter conſenting, ſup-
" per was introduced, and a glaſs of
" wine drank, in which my poor
" child inſiſted ſome noxious drug
" was infuſed, and which had ſuch
" an effect on her, that after many
" proteſtations of eternal conſtan-
" cy and marriage on one ſide, and
" acknowledgements of gratitude on
" the other, ſhe was prevailed on
" and ruin'd by him whom ſhe be-
" fore had look'd on as her guardian
" angel and preſerver.———

" Next morning he went on " board, and return'd about noon " to dinner, after which he went " again to the ſhip, with a promiſe " to come back at night. About " duſk ſhe receiv'd a note (without " any aſſignment) deſiring her to ac- " company the bearer, who would " conduct her to the arms of her " lover.

" She accordingly went with the " man, who, after ſeveral turnings, " enter'd a houſe ſhe knew not whi- " ther, and was ſhewn to a room " up ſtairs, into which as ſhe enter'd " the perſon who lighted her up " dropt the candle, and ſhut the " door. —— She was immediately

" ſeiz'd

" ſeiz'd round the waiſt and flung
" on a bed, from which, notwith-
" ſtanding her fright, ſhe had
" ſtrength ſufficient to ariſe, and
" falling at the perſon's feet ——
" cry'd,

" Do not,—do not, my dear Wat-
" ſon,—do not damn me forever!—
" Tho' you have triumph'd over my
" innocence — do not confign me to
" eternal ruin!——Is it not enough
" to have deſtroy'd my peace of
" mind, which you have already ac-
" compliſh'd, and which I hardly
" think my future penitence can re-
" eſtabliſh? —— forbear it's reitera-
" tion——do not, my dear Watſon,
" and I will———

" Here ſhe was interrupted in a
" ſtrange voice that told her ſhe was
" miſtaken in her man —— that his
" name was not Watſon —— that he
" only happen'd to lay in the next
" room to her and Mr. Watſon (if
" his name was Watſon) the night
" before, and hearing him call her
" Louiſa, thought he ſhould have
" no diſlike to a lodging with her
" that night, and as he had watch'd
" Watſon on board had ſent that
" note, which brought her there,
" where he was very ſure no one
" could give them any interruption;
" but, as ſhe ſeem'd to repent her
" laſt engagement, he could have
" his pennyworth for his penny elſe-

" where;

" where; and wiſhing her farewel " left the room; when a woman, " whoſe countenance expreſt every " villainous deſign a harden'd viſage " can ſhew (theſe were Louiſa's ex- " preſſions) came in, and aſked what " ſhe would drink? ſhe reply'd, no- " thing—but would beg the perſon " who led her hither might conduct " her back.

" The Harradan reply'd, 'twas " like enough, but ſhe had not done " with her yet —— that ſhe did not " get new faces every day; but when " ſhe did, ſhe ſwore ſhe'd make " the moſt of them; and then or- " der'd my child to prepare to ſee " company, as ſhe expected the

" captain of the Quadrant there the
" next day, who was the beſt cuſto-
" mer to her back, and ſhould be
" ſerv'd firſt.——But come (conti-
" tinued ſhe) won't you drink? —
" You may as well——come, there's
" a good girl; 'twill do you no
" harm, and make your cheeks roſy,
" you jade you——for, though you
" have a fine made face, a little of
" the red would do it no harm.——
" Then whiſtling order'd a noggin
" of brandy, which when it came,
" as Louiſa refuſed to touch, ſhe
" drank half off and flung the reſt
" in the poor creature's face, and
" damning her for a ſqueamiſh
" whore, left the room.

" A

" A week elaps'd, in which the " inhuman monſter try'd every art " to prevail on my unhappy daugh- " ter to commence proſtitute, in " vain; —— when ſhe one day " enter'd her doleful apartment, and " ſwearing the cloaths ſhe wore " would better become ſome of her " children, of leſs tender conſciences, " they ſhould have them —— then " cutting the lace of her ſtays, and " untying her petticoats ſtrip'd her " to her ſhift; and throwing ſome " rags to her, told her they were " too good for her, and left her over- " whelm'd in woe.

" Various were the ſufferings ſhe " underwent for a fortnight more,

" when

" when the cruel wretch, finding it " impoſſible to bring my child a " willing victim to proſtitution, and " as her beauty declined in propor- " tion to the barbarities ſhe had " born, ſhe reſolved to be rid of her, " and accordingly the night before I " ſaw her had turn'd her, thus wretch- " ed, thus, ragged, into the ſtreet.

" She had wander'd till morning, " and juſt before I found her had " been accoſted by thoſe abandon'd " creatures, who inſiſted ſhe ſhou'd " pay her footing, and ſhe endea- " vouring to eſcape from them, were " ill uſing her when I fortunate- " ly reſcu'd her from their brutality.

" My

" My poor Louiſa's diſmal ſtory,
" you will not wonder, pierced the
" very inmoſt receſſes of my an-
" guiſhed mind, and tore my agoniz-
" ed ſoul with torments inexpreſſible.

" Having now repoſſeſſion of my
" deplored daughter, I thought it
" would be impoſſible either to leave
" her where her ruin had been ac-
" compliſh'd, or get her to her ten-
" der mother's boſom once again as
" I had but eighteen ſhillings left;
" when recollecting I had heard re-
" turn'd chaiſes often went from
" Portſmouth to Saliſbury, from
" whence we could have the waggon
" to Camden and walk to Halſtead,
" I got a man to enquire for one,
" who

" who to my wiſhes agreed with a
" driver to ſet us down at Saliſbury
" for ſix ſhillings. We accordingly
" proceeded on our journey as far
" as Aleſbury, when, as my lately
" recovered treaſure grew worſe, and
" could proceed no further, we
" were forced to alight.

" My daughter was ſo very weak
" that ſhe fainted as ſhe was taken out,
" and another chaiſe at the inſtant
" driving furiouſly by was ordered
" by one in it to ſtop.——The dri-
" ver obeying the perſon deſcend-
" ed, and coming to us looked in
" Louiſa's face, whoſe eyes were yet
" cloſed——cry'd

" Heaven,

"Heavens, my love!——is this Louiſa Vernon?"——

"Yes ſir, I replied, this is Louiſa "Vernon——my unhappy daugh- "ter."

"He ſeemed not to attend to me, "but giving his aſſiſtance to my "child, ſhe was convey'd into a "room; where, as ſoon as ſhe re- "covered her ſenſes, ſhe look'd "eagerly on the ſtranger, crying, "——do not my eyes deceive me! "——or is the author of my ruin "preſent?——Oh Watſon! (if Wat- "ſon thou art)——why doſt thou "come now?——for to your ac- "count muſt all my ſorrows here and "hereafter be placed;—but, as I am "dying,

" dying, I do—and may God for-
" give you."

" Watſon bending over her and
" kiſſing her clay cold hand, enquir-
" ed——how did I loſe you! — for
" had not that been the caſe you
" never ſhould have come to this."

" O! (ſaid Louiſa, hardly to be
" heard) a villain ſent me a note as
" from you——I went I know not
" where —— (then faltering in her
" ſpeech) I am going —— my dear
" father, remember me to my dear
" ——my poor afflicted mother——
" Oh Watſon! Watſon! you are the
" cauſe of — here ſhe again fainted,
" —and I taking her for dead—look-
" ing on Watſon as her murderer

" raving

" raving for my daughter — over-
" come with the weight of woe —
" turn'd to Watſon, ſaying ———

" See here the works of your
" wickedneſs —— villain, where's my
" Louiſa?—my child, that you un-
" der a generous pretence reſcu'd
" from a wicked woman:—here ſhe
" is—O yes ſhe's here indeed!—but
" how! —— dead. —— Yes ſhe that
" might, had it not been for thee,
" adorned life —— thro' thee, lies
" dead." ———

" Overcome by the violence of
" my grief, and forgetting the great
" principle of my calling —— pati-
" ence—I ſeized a knife from the
" ſideboard, and plung'd it into Wat-
" ſon's

" ſon's breaſt, who fell ſidelong by
" Louiſa.

" I let fall the knife and fell on
" my knees by them as they lay,
" claſping Louiſa's body cried—my
" heart ſtrings are breaking ——
" forgive me, O my God! this raſh
" action, —— and was proceeding,
" when I was ſeized by two men for
" the fell deed I had juſt committed,
" but begging I might be permitted
" to kiſs my dear daughter, they
" conſenting, as I was led up to her
" for that purpoſe, Watſon, whom
" we all thought already dead, faint-
" ly looking through the film of
" death, ſaid——

" Venerable

" Venerable old man!—God bleſs
" you——I merit what I have re-
" ceived——tho' in the firſt place I
" was not intentionally guilty, yet
" in that intoxicating liquor — there
" lay my crime——but had I found
" Louiſa when I return'd at night, I
" would have married her —— I made
" every enquiry then in vain — and
" renewed them this morning when
" I came on ſhore, and getting in-
" telligence of you now was purſu-
" ing to put my honourable deſigns
" in execution----but heaven has pre-
" vented my intentions, and left me
" a warning — that a perſon, when
" he uſes any diſhonourable means to

" obtain his deſire, may bring ruin
" on himſelf in the end."

" He here ſtopt through weak-
" neſs, and I was again led to kiſs
" my daughter, which doing, ſhe
" to my amazement was yet alive,
" and on the application of my lips
" to her cheek, (ſhe ſaid)----my fa-
" ther"———

" I forgetting our ſituation, cried
" what wou'd my love!"———

" She ſpeaking louder———tell my
" Watſon 'tis well———I am happy I
" have ſeen him, and told him I
" forgave him — and as I have your
" forgiveneſs I die content"———

" Are

" Are you my Louiſa----return-
" ed Watſon, who for the laſt time
" recovered himſelf — have you for-
" given Watſon and are you happy
" at it?——May heaven add every
" bleſſing I propoſed myſelf on you
" ——will you allow me then one
" kind forgiving look and ſeal it
" with a kiſs?"

" She reply'd, her ſight was gone,
" but from her ſoul ſhe bleſt him;
" and lifting her hand that he might
" take it, it accidentally fell upon his
" breaſt, who had juſt ſtrength to
" ſhift it to his face, and kiſſing
" it——they both expired.

" The miniſters of juſtice con-
" veyed me before a magiſtrate,

" who hearing the moſt diſmal ac-
" count pity'd me: and ſaid, from
" my appearance, had the offence
" been bailable, he would have been
" my ſecurity himſelf, but as it
" was not, he muſt commit me hi-
" ther.

" Here, ſir, at length I am ar-
" rived, and here —— if the foun-
" tain of all mercy can beſtow it on
" a wretch like me —— here muſt
" my miſeries end —— theſe are the
" particulars I would have commu-
" nicated to my unhappy wife, and
" if you will take the trouble ——
" may the prayers of every righte-
" ous perſon avail you and God's
" bleſſing ſtill attend you."

As

As the old gentleman had fatigued himſelf prodigiouſly by his narration, we were in hopes a little reſt would do him good, and getting the turnkey to bring him a glaſs of warm wine, left him, after conſoling him as much as his ſituation would admit.———

Mr. Wyndham immediately wrote the unhappy cataſtrophe as he deſired, ſoftening the circumſtances as they wou'd admit, but delay'd ſending the account to Mrs. Vernon, till the next day——when enquiring as ſoon as we aroſe how he did——was told by the attendant, that he had never ceaſed imploring forgiveneſs of the divine being for

his dire offence till ſix in the morning, when he breathed his laſt.

My huſband was very much affected with poor Mr. Vernon's melancholy fate, and obſerved —— how terrible muſt be the ſituation of Lord Melford, when he ſhou'd hear this ſtory, and reflect that he alone had occaſion'd the premature deſtruction of two of his fellow creatures, young, gay, and but for him innocently happy, and ſent a reverend father ſorrowing to the grave, who had left an aged widow, like a lonely dove, to mourn her mate, till ſhe ſhould cloſe her weeping eyes in death!

"Oh!

" Oh! (continued Mr. Wyndham)
" what a bleſſing or a curſe are rich-
" es!——how happy their poſſeſſor
" who regards them as ſo many
" means to eaſe the burthen of the
" bending poor!——to wipe the tears
" from the pale cheek of deep diſ-
" treſs!——to eaſe the bed of ſick-
" neſs, to relieve the hapleſs or-
" phan, or beſtow a portion with
" ſome low, tho' lovely virgin, to
" her labouring faithful youth!——
" how miſerable thoſe who employ
" them to purpoſes the contrary
" ——I think had I been permit-
" ted them that want ſhould ne'er
" have reach'd forth her wither'd

" hand, nor diſtreſs ſued to me in " vain."

He went on in reflections like theſe ſometime, when the turnkey came to acquaint us a gentleman deſired to ſpeak with him. —— We went, and were accoſted by a perſon genteelly dreſt, who I thought had a certain ſtiffneſs in his air, and affectation in his manner, that told me he was obliged to his taylor alone for the appellation of gentleman. ——

He told Mr. Wyndham, he was very ſorry a miſtake of his ſteward's ſhould have occaſioned our confinement——that his name was Jefferys; and had been on a party of pleaſure ever ſince the day he had ſent to Belverton

verton—that before he went he had given orders for the execution of ſome writings——and the note being made payable to the bearer it wanted no indorſement; and having left it unfortunately among thoſe papers, the ſteward had been too diligent to his truſt, and had arreſted Mr. Wyndham thereon; but as he had ordered the action to be withdrawn immediately, we ſhould ſoon be at liberty, and he would come and take us to his houſe to recompence us for the trouble we had been at on his account.———

My prepoſſeſſions againſt him gave way to eſteem for him, and I could have eagerly embrac'd him, as the

the

the heart-reviving ſounds fell from his hony'd tongue. He took my huſband by the hand, and ſeemingly much affected only ſaid,—— "Be eaſy, ſir, till you ſee or hear "from me again;" and turn'd away.——

While he was ſpeaking, I obſerv'd an old man ſtanding at a diſtance, who, as ſoon as Mr. Jefferys had parted, came up to us, and falling on his knees cry'd, —— "My good "God! when we parted laſt, did "your poor ſervant Harris think "the next time I ſaw you would be "here!——O, ſir!——oh, madam! "——the news when I heard it diſ-"tracted, but the ſight almoſt kills "me."

"me." We raiſed the faithful friend, and comforting him all in our power, led him to our room, where when he ſaw the wretched furniture he again wept.———

After ſome time he inform'd us he had been at Montpellier, with Sir Edward Goringe, ever ſince he left Belverton——that the air and advice had quite recover'd Sir Edward, from whence they return'd to London ſome time ago ------ that he laſt night arriv'd at Coltsford, and had rode over this morning hoping to ſee us at Belverton, where he heard the unhappy news of our misfortune, and was now cut to the ſoul to find it true.———

We

We thank'd the generous man, who continued —— "But who, my "dear ſir, was that parted from "you?—do you know? — or what "did he come here for?"

"For the moſt noble act man can "perform (reply'd Mr. Wyndham) "to releaſe the impriſon'd."

"He come to releaſe you, ſir?"

"Yes, Harris, and carry me "home with him; for though, by "an unhappy miſtake, I am con-"fined here by him, he has given "orders for my diſcharge, and will "make his houſe my aſylum from "every future want."

"Thank

"Thank my God (cry'd Harris) "in what a critical moment did I "arrive! —— O, ſir! heaven will "yet preſerve you —— I know it "will——this, this is an earneſt of "it. —— He is a villain, ſir, and of "the deepeſt dye; and, though you "know him not, the only enemy "you have in the world, beſides Sir "George's lady.—I know him well, "ſir —— his name is Jefferys —— "Tom Jefferys."

"Jefferys! — you amaze me — "where did you know him!—— "how!"

I and Mr. Wyndham were all terror and expectation——Harris went on.——

"He

" He was footman under me at " your father's, and, when I left " Sir George, he ſucceeded me as " butler —— he was tool to Lady " Wyndham——and as Fletcher (for " I call'd on her laſt week) inform- " ed me had gone away with Miſs " Wardman, her ladyſhip's daugh- " ter, and had robb'd the houſe of " every valuable thing they could " get poſſeſſion of: Lady Wyndham " pretended to be very much en- " raged, but every body believ'd it " was with her conſent, as ſhe would " ſuffer no enquiry to be made after " them, nor let it be known what " Sir George had loſt.

" I

" I know, ſir, ſome diabolical
" ſcheme is in agitation.——Stir not
" with him——ſtay, ſir, though he
" ſhould give you liberty to go——
" ſtay here, ſir; and to-morrow I'll
" call on you, and find ſome place
" of ſecurity for you, till I can trace
" this curſed intrigue to its ſource;
" or, as I muſt inſtantly go to Coltſ-
" ford, ſhould your diſcharge come
" time enough to-day, take a chaiſe,
" my dear ſir, and follow me, where
" you ſhall be ſafe. —— I have but
" five guineas about me, but that
" will be ſufficient; take it, my ho-
" nour'd maſter, tis yours, I have
" more at home."

Harris's

Harris's ſtory (which he deliver'd in a violent hurry) had ſuch an effect on us, that we took the money without heſitation, and he immediately left us; when we ſat without ſpeaking a conſiderable time, till we were recover'd from our ſenſeleſs ſtate by the kind keeper, who told us we were free.———

Rous'd by the welcome information, we immediately began to put Harris's advice into execution, by deſiring to know what we were indebted for our abode, during our ſtay in the priſon; but the gaoler refus'd to take any thing, though he was told our friend had left us five guineas. —— He ſaid he was glad of

it,

it, as he was ſure we ſhould have occaſion for it all ſoon, when he hoped I ſhould have a happy moment. I thank'd him kindly, little thinking that moment, as he call'd it, was ſo nigh; he ſent for a chaiſe, which we order'd to Coltsford, and aſcended with the hopes of ſoon ſeeing.——

As we left the priſon-gates the keeper ſaid to Mr. Wyndham, "I "told you, ſir, I would ſpeak to "ſome gentlemen on your behalf— "I have, and have received ſeven "guineas on your account; they "are here at your ſervice."

Mr. Wyndham thank'd him, and inſiſted he ſhould keep them to repay himſelf for our maintenance, while we were in his cuſtody——he declared he would not; but, as we refuſed them, he would (with Mr. Wyndham's conſent) bury poor ill-fated Mr. and Miſs Vernon, with Watſon, in one grave therewith: we thank'd him for his intention, and deſiring him to perform the charitable deed, drove gently from the dreary manſion.———

We had proceeded about a mile from the town when I found myſelf extremely ill, and the maternal pangs encreaſed ſo faſt upon me,

me, I could go no farther than Wilton.——

Mr. Wyndham here diſcharg'd the chaiſe; order'd the boy to return to Saliſbury, and acquaint our late generous hoſt with the occaſion of our not finiſhing our intended journey —— that he might be able to let Harris know next day where to find us.——

It being known where we came from, the landlord would not let me be carried into his houſe, ſwearing he would not burn his fingers without the proſpect of a plaiſter——but his wife (who happily for me, govern'd him and the houſe) inſiſted I ſhould come in, and be taken care

of too, as ſhe pitied my caſe, and wiſh'd herſelf in the ſame ſituation. I was therefore, in obedience to her commands, carry'd into a very ſnug room, where as my huſband had been ſeen to take ſeveral guineas from his pocket, I ſoon had every requiſite attendant, and about eleven at night was ſafely deliver'd of a fine boy.——

Mr. Wyndham next morning kiſſing my hand in exceſs of rapture, cry'd——"My lov'd Eliza, how in "the midſt of our afflictions do we "receive the greateſt bleſſings!—— "How —— had you been one day "ſooner (what you are now) mo- "ther to this dear boy—how could "you

" you have ſuſtained the poignant
" throws of child-birth——without
" the tender help of your own ſex, —
" immured in a priſon — without
" one neceſſary---without one aſſiſt-
" ing comforter but your poor
" Wyndham---who could have af-
" forded you but very little wretched
" conſolation in your terrible con-
" dition; while here we enjoy (tho'
" not with elegance) many conve-
" niences, and I, thro' mercy, have
" caſh ſufficient to defray every ex-
" pence, till you (I hope) ſhall once
" again be well. Then if —— (I
" cannot doubt after this deliverance)
" therefore no ifs—but then—we once

" more ſhall be enabled to maintain " ourſelves and little ones."——

He now left me to my repoſe; and ſaid, as he felt an inclination, he would write to Lord Melford, at Halſtead, concerning Mrs. Vernon, and, in terms the moſt gentle, couch the moſt cogent reaſons; that his Lordſhip was doubly obligated to take care of her and her ſon---as, thro' his means, they were doubly deprived, ſhe of a huſband and a child, he of a father and a ſiſter.

When I ſaw him again, he acquainted me he had ſent the letter, which he hoped would have the effect he deſired---and that Harris, who had been to Fiſherton, and was directed

directed to Wilton, had juſt been with him, and inform'd him he was extremely ſorry he could not ſtay at preſent to make any enquiry about Jefferys, as he had received a letter from Sir Edward to meet him at Bath that evening, he therefore had only time ſufficient to acquaint us with his journey, and to hope to ſee us ſafe at his return — he deſired his duty to me, and wiſh'd me joy, when remounting his horſe, he rode away.

About a quarter of an hour after, the nurſe brought Mr. Wyndham a letter, which came from the poor faithful warm-hearted Harris, and contained a Bank-note of ten pounds and theſe words:

" Honour'd Sir,

" When I ſet out from Coltsford, " I took ſome money to deliver my " worthy maſter from confinement, " but finding you already free, I " brought it with me to you at Wil- " ton; but----I do not know why— " when I ſeveral times attempted to " take it from my pocket, my heart " ſunk, and I could not for the ſoul " of me. I have, ſince I left you, " had a glaſs of brandy, and now I " take heart of grace, and make bold " to ſend it you this way. I wiſh it " was in my power to ſend all I owe " you, but as it is not, nor ever can, " hope you will take the will for the " deed. Excuſe, honor'd Sir, my

" boldneſs

" boldneſs in writing this, and ho-
" ping you will allow me to pay my
" duty to my dear lady and your-
" ſelf.——

" I remain

" Your moſt humble ſervant

" (till death)

" J. HARRIS."

We knew not which to admire moſt——the gratitude, the humility, the faithfulneſs, or the generoſity of the worthy creature. —— Mr. Wyndham wiſh'd the world was fill'd with Harris's——he ſaid——

" Then all mankind would live in mutual love,
" And earth would much reſemble Heaven
" above."

As

As want ſeem'd to be now remov-ed to a diſtance, the proſpect of its horrid companions vaniſh'd, and we had again the glorious view of happineſs before us. ——

I had lain-in a fortnight when Lord Melford came to the inn and enquir'd for Mr. Wyndham, (tho' I did not know it for ſome days, for my tender huſband conceal'd it from me, fearing the conſequences might be fatal to me) who was introduced to his lordſhip and a gentleman in the parlour, where as ſoon as the waiter had withdrawn his lordſhip began. ——

"I ſuppoſe, ſir, this is your "letter —— here is your aſſign-"ment."

"It is, my lord——I never write "any letter without an aſſignment, "nor ever ſign any thing I'm a-"ſham'd to own."

"Then I muſt tell you, ſir, you "are a villain for writing this."

"A villain! —— how, my lord! "——Does it contain any thing that "can entitle its author to that ſcan-"dalous name?"

"It does, ſir —— it contains re-"flections on the character of a "man of quality—a nobleman—on "me, ſir!"

"I

" I am ſorry, my lord, that a-
" ny man of quality — any noble-
" man — very ſorry — that Lord
" Melford ſhould have done any
" thing that with juſtice could oc-
" caſion thoſe reflections."

" You here, ſir, tax me with a
" crime my ſoul deteſts! —— You
" charge me, though not directly
" yet obliquely, with being a mur-
" derer!"

" I, my lord, only ſay — your
" lordſhip, on reflection, muſt con-
" ſider yourſelf as the primary, tho'
" not as the executory cauſe of the
" death of thoſe unhappy people."

" That,

" That, ſir, is accuſing me of " murder :——Therefore as in your " letter you profeſs yourſelf a gen- " tleman, though I think I do you " too much honor, I inſiſt on im- " mediate reparation for the inſult " on my honor through the vile " imputation, by trying your arm " againſt mine——but as I ſee you " have no ſword, take this or my " friend's here——(throwing two on " the ſide-table) chuſe which you " like——or, if you are not maſ- " ter of the ſcience, here are piſ- " tols."

" And thus, my lord, you would " wipe off the imputation of one " murder by committing another,

" or

" or force me to be guilty of what " I have ſo earneſtly wiſh'd to make " your lordſhip repent.—Be pleas'd, " my lord, yet to hear reaſon."

" Damn reaſon (reply'd his lord- " ſhip, catching up one of the piſ- " tols) if you do not inſtantly kneel " and aſk my pardon, or take one " of the weapons from the table " and defend yourſelf, I will pre- " vent your farther calumny by " ſhooting you thro' the head."

Mr. Wyndham finding no poſſi- bility of avoiding fighting, ſaid— (taking up a ſword) ——— " Thou " knoweſt, O God! with what re- " luctance I now engage——but as " it

"it is the cauſe of diſtreſs'd inno-
"cence, nerve my arm!"

They immediately engag'd —— and after ſeveral paſſes (in which my huſband kept entirely on the defenſive) Lord Melford's rage (which was heighten'd by meeting with ſuch reſiſtance and ſo much ſkill, where he expected little of either) threw him from every guard and laid him quite open to Mr. Wyndham, who, perceiving his advantage, and making a feint, by parrying and thruſting at the ſame time, had the happineſs to wound his lordſhip in the ſword-arm, who dropping his ſword, and at that inſtant tripping ſome-how on the floor

he

he fell on his back, crying ——
" Damn you, ſir — take my life —
" for I'll not accept it at your
" hands, by God."

" God forbid (return'd Mr.
" Wyndham) I ſhould either take
" your life, or you accept it at my
" hands! —— No, my lord—keep
" it, till he that gave it ſhall again
" require it, and employ it for the
" purpoſes that Heaven deſign'd
" it."

My huſband laying the ſword on the table went to my lord, whoſe friend, ſeeing the duel at an end, had help'd him to ariſe, and taking hold of his lordſhip's hand, ſaid he hop'd he was not wounded much—

he

he reply'd—" not much—but your " words, Wyndham, pierce me " deeper than your ſword!"

" Do they, my lord? (returned " my huſband) then are you again " Lord Melford, and worthy the " title of nobility. At college I " remember you was remark'd for " generoſity———

" At college, ſir (cry'd my lord) " did you know me there?"

" I did, my lord —— while you " was of Chriſt-church, I was of " St. Mary-hall——and though I " hardly knew you perſonally, as " you was my ſenior, yet I had " heard much of your character.— " If your lordſhip remembers, you

" was the night before you left the
" univerſity, on the news of your
" father's death, ſet upon by ſome
" bargemen."

" I was, ſir — I ſhall never forget
" it—and ſhould certainly have been
" kill'd had it not been for the aſ-
" ſiſtance of a generous ſtranger,
" who, though quite a ſtripling,
" help'd me at the peril of his own
" life, and receiv'd a dangerous cut
" on his neck there, till farther aſ-
" ſiſtance came, and the ruffians ran
" away.——But what of that?"

" I was that ſtripling, my lord—
" here—(opening his collar) here is
" the ſeam of that wound which I
" ſhall carry to my grave."

" Oh,

" Oh, God! — (cry'd my lord,
" embracing him) is this the return
" I have made you then for ſaving
" my life, to endeavour to take
" yours! —— Forgive me not—for
" I can never forgive myſelf the
" damn'd attempt.——Why did you
" not tell me who you was, before I
" lifted my curſed arm againſt the
" man to whom I was already be-
" holden for life, unleſs it was to
" make me doubly ſo!"

" The cauſe I intended to plead,
" my lord, I thought did not re-
" quire private returns of friend-
" ſhip. —— I hoped to make your
" lordſhip ſenſible of a duty in-
" cumbent on you, from general

" principles of humanity, of pro-
" viding for the unhappy remains
" of poor Vernon's family.—There-
" fore as I imagin'd your lordſhip's
" juſtice needed not the bias of ob-
" ligations receiv'd, I avoided diſ-
" covering myſelf; and am certain,
" had not your lordſhip unhappily
" been too warm, you would be-
" fore now have been convinc'd
" of your duty, and reſolv'd to
" make what reſtitution remains in
" your power."

My lord's friend, who was a ſur-geon his lordſhip had brought on pur-poſe, having prepar'd an apparatus, now dreſs'd the wound, which was quite through the fleſhy part of the arm

but

but of little conſequence —— after which Lord Melford went on—— "I "am exceſſive ſorry for my heat; but "really I thought myſelf groſſly "abus'd by you in that letter—and "which now, was it not from you, "I could ſcarce put up with.

"As for the girl, to be ſure, I "did intend a gallantry with — and "which I thought ſhe would have no "objection to, as I often have fan-"cy'd when I've ſeen her at her "father's, at church or elſewhere, "ſhe uſed to look on me with eyes "that told me her fortreſs might be "eaſily won without a long ſiege— "and I accordingly, as there was "no opportunity to commence the

" amour while ſhe continued at her
" father's, contriv'd to ſend her to
" London, to mother Ledyard's,
" (who has ſince, poor wretch, in a
" drunken fit fell down ſtairs and
" broke her neck) where I might
" have room ſufficient for my
" ſtrength.

" I only ſaw her once there, and
" finding ſhe had no inclination for
" a rencontre then, left her, and
" thought to take her in ſome more
" lucky minute —— but before that
" came, ſhe ran away with a young
" fellow and I have not heard of her
" ſince. I wrote her father word of
" the affair——and this is all I know
" of the matter: —— And murder,
" (which

"(which your letter ſeems to alledge
"againſt me) Mr. Wyndham, is a
"very heinous charge! —— But do,
"ſir, acquaint me with what parti-
"culars you know concerning it,
"and I ſhall be very ready to give
"any aſſiſtance or relief in my pow-
"er, not only to them but to any
"object in diſtreſs."

Mr. Wyndham acquainted him with their untimely end, and related their ſtory in ſo pathetic a manner, that he drew tears often from Lord Melford; and, at the concluſion, ſet his lordſhip's conduct in the commencement of the unhappy affair in ſo juſt a point of light, that my lord in an agony of grief curs'd himſelf,

and wiſh'd the forfeiture of his whole eſtate, and himſelf baniſh'd to ſome wide waſte, or confin'd in ſome dreary dungeon — would reſtore one of their departed lives. ———

" O (ſaid he) that we did but " conſider before we let looſe our " paſſions, to what dreadful lengths " they may run, and what calami- " ties their indulgence may bring " on many, with ourſelves! then " we ſhould check their firſt im- " pulſe, and govern them by our " reaſon. How many unhappy mo- " ments have I brought on my- " ſelf, by ſinning only in intent! " —— how many wretched hours " (if ſhe has many to live) on the " trem-

" trembling widow! —— How ma-
" ny excruciating thoughts muſt
" ariſe, accompany'd with curſes
" upon me, during the life of the
" poor ſon! —— tell me, Wynd-
" ham—my friend—thou who haſt
" twice preſerved me from the
" grave—tell me what can I do?
" —what reſtoration can I make?—
" can money bring a huſband from
" the dark tomb again to his poor
" widow'd wife?——will riches re-
" compence the loſs of a fond fa-
" ther? ——— No —— O that it
" would!"

My huſband, whoſe ſoul was fill'd with joy to find him in this ſituation, only adviſed him (as it was the ut-

moſt

moſt he could do) to try what effect it might have. "For tho' (he "continued) as you obſerve it "cannot reſtore the dead to life, it "can eaſe the calamities of the li-"ving, and comfort the afflicted"—

Lord Melford heartily thanked Mr. Wyndham for his advice—— "I go (ſaid he) to put it into imme-"diate execution —— farewell my "friend, and when I have compleat-"ed all I can perform, you ſhall "again ſee or hear from poor re-"pentant Melford"——ſo ſaying he and his companion drove away, and left my huſband happy he had ſucceeded ſo well.

The

The following week (which was when I was made acquainted with theſe particulars) Mr. Wyndham received a letter from his Lordſhip, acquainting him he had performed his intention, by purchaſing the perpetual advowſon of a living worth three hundred pounds a year, with an immediate reſignation to which he had preſented young Mr. Vernon; and had ſettled two hundred a year on Mrs. Vernon, which, after her deceaſe, was to devolve on her ſon, and his heirs, for ever. —— That he had found out Mrs. Watſon, who was almoſt inconſolable for the loſs of her ſon; on whom he had likewiſe ſettled the

intereſt

intereſt of three thouſand pounds for life, and at her death the principal was to be divided between her two daughters,——to each of which he had, beſides, beſtowed one thouſand pounds, to be paid them when they ſhall come of age or marry.—

We were very glad his lordſhip's repentance ſeemed ſo ſincere, both for himſelf and the unhappy ſufferers; for, as it muſt be an ingenuous mind that will confeſs itſelf wrong, when conſcious of being in an error, and proceed no farther therein, ſo it muſt be a heart truely reclaimed that will endeavour all it can to repair any injury it may have

have done, while in the paths of folly and diſſipation.———

My month being nearly up, I began to conſult with my huſband how we were to ſupport our family, and we could think of no better method then again keeping a ſchool, if we could find any vacancy near, or hear of one any where elſe, and made all the enquiry we could for ſuch a ſituation, but in vain.—

My little boy at this time was taken very ill, and continued in violent agony for two days; during which the ſhrieks and groans of the poor innocent were ſo terrible they muſt have pierced the moſt obdurate heart, and gave me ſharper pains than at

his

his birth —— could the dear lamb have made us ſenſible where his complaint lay, I believe I had not been ſo miſerable: but to ſee him lie in torture, which he could only make us ſenſible of by cries and moans, and which, as we could not make him ceaſe, we knew we did not procure him any eaſe, went to my heart.———

He continued ſo till the third day, when he was ſeiz'd with ſtrong convulſions and expired in my lap. I at the firſt moment was very thankful his pains were ended, and all future ſorrow prevented, and could not avoid repeating over him thoſe lines I have ſomewhere read——

" Happy

" Happy infant! early bleſt!
" Reſt in peaceful ſlumber, reſt;
" Early reſcu'd from the cares,
" Which encreaſe with growing years.
" No delights were worth thy ſtay,
" Smiling as they ſeem and gay;
" All man's gaiety is vain,
" All his laughter is but pain.
" Here is no delight or joy,
" But the fondeſt hopes will cloy;
" Short and ſickly are they all,
" Hardly taſted e'er they pall;
" Laſting only and divine,
" Is an innocence like thine;
" Safely then enjoy your reſt,
" Of your innocence poſſeſt;
" Happy Infant! from the womb,
" So ſoon haſten'd to the tomb.——

A mother's tears, ſpite of my reſignation, would often flow over his little body; and when he was buried, I could have wiſh'd rather to continue gazing on his grave, than to have return'd without him. — Theſe griefs might have laſted ſome time, but were ſwallow'd up very ſoon in the loſs of my huſband.——

The next day, which was a week ago yeſterday, a man came to the inn and enquir'd for Mr. Wyndham, ſaying he had a letter for him from Sir Daniel Drayton at Winterſlow, which he was order'd to wait an anſwer to.——On its being deliver'd to my huſband he open'd it and read—

"SIR,

"SIR,

"As I am in want of a tutor for "my ſon, a promiſing lad, about "twelve years old, and hearing "you have had a liberal educa- "tion and are of unblemiſh'd mo- "rals, if you chuſe to ſuperintend "him in that capacity, and will meet "me to-morrow morning at eleven "o'clock at Winterſlow, I dare ſay "we ſhall agree on terms worth "your acceptance.

"I am,

"Sir,

"Yours, &c.

"D. DRAYTON."

"P.S. My knowledge of you "came by a gentleman who heard "your ſtory from the keeper of "Fiſherton-gaol; and your having "a family will be no objection as "I have room enough in my houſe, "and your wife may, if ſhe is ca- "pable, be governeſs to my daugh- "ter."

My huſband having read the note returned his duty by the ſervant, and deſired him to acquaint his maſter he would attend him at the appointed time. ——

We ſpent the day in contemplation of the lovely proſpect of our happineſs to come. —— "Are we "not—

" not—(ſaid my love, claſping me
" in his arms)——are we not any
" longer to be the ſport of fortune?
" —— are we yet to be ſettled in
" life?——Happy arreſt!----charm-
" ing impriſonment! —— See, my
" life, how good can ſpring out of
" evil!——The retroſpection of paſt
" troubles will amuſe us as we ad-
" vance in years, and ſeem like the
" remembrance of a dream."

Next morning—fatal morning, alas, for us both!——Mr. Wyndham went away with a promiſe to return ſoon—ſince which unhappy moment I have never ſeen him. —— Whereever thy dear body lies—my ſoul's beſt love!——thy image is buried in

my heart; and in a little time we ſhall be join'd again never to part more.——Oh, my Amelia----(looking on her child) —— when I am happy with your dear pappa, what will become of you!——O God! I aſk no more, than that thou wouldſt be pleaſed to take my little one to thee, before I pay my debt to nature, and mine be mingled with its fellow-clay!——Dear departed ſaint! ——if happy ſpirits do hold intercourſe with ſouls while cloſed in walls of fleſh——tell me, O tell me, bleſſed angel, how long I muſt linger yet e'er I ſhall rejoin my life — my happineſs!——

Miſs

Miſs Jones (down whoſe ſweet face the tears had ſilently roll'd ſome time) now burſt out aloud, which interrupting Mrs. Wyndham in her ejaculations ſhe ſtop'd, and looking at Miſs Jones, went on.

" If only the recital of my miſeries can cauſe ſuch affliction in a ſtranger's breaſt, think what, oppreſt with their weight, it muſt do in mine; but as I would not willingly cauſe any uneaſineſs to the generous mind, I diſcontinue my woe-fraught ſtory."

We begg'd her to go on, for tho' pity was all we could impart, we long'd to hear her finiſh her ſad tale, that we might beſtow a double ſhare of that.

She, bowing, preſently reſum'd her account.

" The firſt day, though I did not expect him till evening, hung heavily upon my hands——my ſpirits, as if conſcious of my unhappy fate, were very low. —— But when evening came, and no Mr. Wyndham—when night approached, and no huſband return'd——they were quite depreſs'd with woe.——In how terrible a manner did I ſpend the hours till morning !——I now ſaw my huſband ſet on by thieves, —— then purſued by murderers —— heard him groan —— ſaw him fall —— beheld his precious blood ſtreaming from moſt hideous wounds —— I heard

him

him call on his Eliza, but call in vain Eliza was not there; and, had ſhe been, could only ſhare his fate.—— Then I ſaw him drowning——heard the daſhing of the parting waters—— perceived him in the liquid element, ſtruggling for life—to live for me.— Indeed I fanciedhim in ten thouſand different ſituations, not one leſs horrid than the other.——

Day-light return'd, but all my happineſs was fled!——the ſun aroſe—— the ſun of all my joy was ſet to riſe no more.——I diſpatch'd meſſengers to Winterſlow; no ſuch letter had been ſent from thence, no ſuch perſon had been there, none ſuch was wanted.——I had the rivers dragg'd

ſent out every way, in vain; —— I then concluded—which I have ſince found, alas! too true — that he had fallen a victim to Jefferys, and that dire woman's revenge.

Five more miſerable days and diſmal nights did I paſs in cruel uncertainty, when yeſterday a labouring man brought me a note ſeal'd up, written in a hand to me unknown, which gave me an account that Mr. Wyndham had been in trouble, but had happily got free and was returning to Wilton; when unfortunately he fell and broke his arm, which diſabled him from coming or writing, but it happened to be juſt before the houſe of a very worthy

gentleman

gentleman, who had humanely taken him in, and ſent for a ſurgeon to ſet it: it then concluded with deſiring me to come immediately with the bearer, who would conduct me to him.——

I left my child with the landlady, and followed the man (or rather led him, as I was often foremoſt) about a mile, when I was conducted into a genteel houſe, in the parlour of which I was introduced to a young perſon gayly dreſt, who accoſted me with "Pray is your name Wynd-"ham?"——It is, madam, (I re-turn'd with a heart overflowing with gratitude) may Heavens bleſs you for your kindneſs to my huſband—But where

where is he madam?——can I not ſee him?——my fears tell me he is worſe!—he is not dead! is he? —" open that door" (ſhe reply'd) —I flew to it, and ſeeing a bed ran to behold my afflicted partner, when I was caught by Jeffreys. ———I ſhrieked aloud, Oh ſir!—where's my Wyndham?——is he not here?—— " no, no madam," (return'd the villain) " he is as ſafe ſome where elſe, " as you are here—thanks to your " begging letter, that let us know " where you were —— I thought " among ſo many limed twiggs we " muſt have the bird at laſt."

I fell on my knees, ſaying, tell me, ſir, where he is? let me inſtantly know,

know, for Heaven's ſake! ——— "why do not I tell you he is ſafe— (return'd the wretch)— and ſo are "you too ſafe here, and in my poſ- "ſeſſion."

I was ſtill on my knees, when the perſon I had before ſeen, came in, and laughing at my ſituation, cry'd, "Is this the obſtacle to our ſplendor, "is this the object I was left for !--- "this the creature I was deſpiſed for! "--- this ſhe with whom Wyndham "would rather ſtarve, than live in "opulence with me! ---O revenge, "revenge, how haſt thou repaid me "for all my ſlights! --- how have I "been ſatisfied by thee on one!---- and now will ſatiate myſelf on the other.

" other.—Proceed, Jefferys; let her " firſt loſs be that jewel, exiſtent " merely in name —— her honor, " as ſhe calls it——I myſelf will aſ- " ſiſt you, as it ſhall contribute to " glut my great revenge."

I fell proſtrate at her feet.----Oh, madam, I returned, I never injur'd you-----never gave you cauſe of offence----then why this uſage?——— Wretched I am already!---wretched to the laſt degree!---Do not attempt to afflict me more-----my ſufferings now are paſt conception!———

" I will—(ſhe reply'd)—I will af- " flict you more; or my revenge " will not be half compleat. Your " little

" little one—ſhe too I'll take care of,
" and then I ſhall be happy."

The dread of my Emily's fate, by this cruel hyena, put my own for a moment from my thoughts; and I implored her for my child.----Spare my dear infant, I ſaid, and let me die---and if you will, in charity to her, never let her know her mother's cruel end, my lateſt breath ſhall bleſs you!———

" Not yet----(ſhe reply'd)---Ye
" ſhall not die till I have ſeen thoſe
" charms rifled which mine were
" neglected for.---Why do you not,
" Jefferys, begin our glorious re-
" venge on her?"

Here

Here both together dragged me on the floor; and I ſcreaming with a force to which my fears added double, a ſervant came in, whom I immediately entreated to be my deliverer: and Jeffreys bid him go inſtantly away, but he reply'd, he could not till he knew the occaſion of that diſmal outcry.———

Jeffreys damn'd him, and (going to a table where his ſword lay, which he drew) ſwore he would run him thro' the body, if he did not inſtantly leave us: — the young fellow not regarding his threats, came towards me and offer'd me his hand, which my fears helping me to take, he immediately lifted me up, and pulling a

piſtol

piſtol from his boſom, ſwore likewiſe the firſt of them that attempted to move, he would blow their brains out—then bowing to me, ſaid.—

" Go, my dear woman—may every " one be preſerved in like diſtreſs — " how often has my heart ach'd on " your account ſince I ſaw you at " Belverton, when I brought you the " money from this villian!——the " man who led you here, will ſafe " conduct you back—I overheard " their damn'd deſign laſt night, and " took care to inform my brother of " it, who was your meſſenger——I " have waited at this door ever ſince " he informed me you was come, " that I might ſee how far their

" cruelty

" cruelty would go, without danger
" to yourſelf, before I made my ap-
" pearance—I will keep them here,
" till you are ſafe from their infernal
" power — go and may Heaven bleſs
" you."

And you alſo, my dear preſerver, was all I ſaid; and ſtaggering out of the room, found the perſon waiting for me at the hall door, who ſeizing my hand hurried me faſt away.—

I was in ſo great a dread that my ſpirits were juſt ſufficient to let my trembling ſteps convey me to the inn at Wilton, where I fainted immediately on my entrance. ——On my recovery, I directly reſolved to quit Wilton, fearing the dreadful contri-

vances

vances of the wicked Jefferys would not let me reſt one day out of their power, and having only a guinea left, for though we had been very frugal, and had reſolved not to change poor Harris's note, if we could any ways avoid it, yet the ſix laſt days of my calamity, and the extraordinary expences I had been at on my poor Wyndham's account had forced me to it, and reduced it to the ſum I mention: I aſk'd the landlady how I and my little Emily could be convey'd to Saliſbury, as I intended to go to London.—She ſaid her horſes had not been out that day, and it would be only exerciſe for them, ſo we ſhould ride in her chaiſe ----I

thank'd her, and embracing her offer ---we were about eight laſt night ſet down at an inn, in Saliſbury.——

Not having money ſufficient to pay my paſſage in the inſide, I was told I might ride without for half price, which as I wanted to be in London (where I can I hope be employed by Mrs. Fletcher, if ſhe is yet alive and maintain thereby my little one) I agreed to and paid fifteen ſhillings for Emily and myſelf; I had a glaſs of wine and water, with a ſlice of bread and butter for my child, whom I immediately afterwards put to bed, and hung weeping over her, till the ſervant came to tell me the coach would ſoon be ready; I

dreſt

dreſt my infant, and put my under petticoat about her, beſide her own cloaths, that the cold might leſs affect her little frame; we were help'd into the baſket; the coachman was kind enough to get ſome ſtraw for me to ſit on, and wrap my feet in, which I did, and preſs'd my little angel, to my wretched boſom; the poor dear ſlept ſoundly, till I found myſelf, as I thought, dying, and endeavouring to make the coachman hear me, which the noiſe of the wheels prevented, ſhe awoke, and I had juſt ſenſes left to give her one fond kiſs, and ſend one wiſh to Heaven for her;—when my woe-weary ſpirits ſeem'd to take their

laſt eternal flight; and I remember no more till your goodneſs revived me, where we breakfaſted this morning."

Here the diſtreſs'd wife ended her melancholy ſtory, but did her ſtory end here, you ſhould have been unacquainted with it;—therefore a truce with your tears, and behold us at dinner at the Red Lyon, at Egham.

As ſoon as dinner was over, I took a walk to ſee what company was in the kitchen; when hearing a poſt-chaiſe rattling, prompted by curioſity, I went to ſee what it contained: an elderly gentleman ſeemingly very weak, attended by

a younger, moſt elegantly formed, alighted from it, and with their ſervants aſſiſtance, were conducted up ſtairs: I ſtrol'd about, pretty near five minutes, when returning into the kitchen, the footman and valet, who were round the fire, were talking with a ſervant in livery, on the dangerous ſtate of the elder Mr. Wyndham; the name Wyndham ſtartled me, and on my enquiry I ſoon had reaſon to believe they were ſomehow related to Mrs. Wyndham; and addreſſing myſelf to the valet, whom I found a good intelligent man, deſired him to acquaint Mr. Wyndham, a gentleman would be glad to ſpeak with him,

on affairs of conſequence; he modeſtly reply'd, he ſhould be glad to carry any meſſage from me to his maſter, but at preſent, young Mr. Wyndham was ſo engaged with his father's diſmal ſituation, he could not.

I reply'd, I hope my meſſage would not encreaſe either the anxiety of the father, or add to the cares of the ſon; nay, I hope to alleviate the diſtreſſes of both.

He ſaid—" that's impoſſible."

You don't know my friend what's impoſſible; but if you'll acquaint Mr. Wyndham, I flatter myſelf, I ſhall not be an unwelcome meſſenger to him.

The

The ſervant went to deliver the meſſage, and returning in two minutes deſired me to walk up; I immediately followed, and was conducted into a cloſet adjoining to a room where the old gentleman had been put to bed.

Mr. Wyndham came out of the room to me, and deſired to know what urgent buſineſs, I could have with him.

I return'd (though I might be miſtaken) I made no doubt he would excuſe me, as I flatter'd myſelf, my intention was to ſerve ſome very worthy people. Do you know, continued I, any one of the name of Wyndham, at Wilton?

"What of that!" reply'd Mr. Wyndham haſtily, ſoftening his voice, "Yes, ſir—O my Eliza!—— but "why do you aſk?"

Not to encreaſe your ſorrow, but if poſſible to give you ſome happineſs: he look'd wildly for a moment, then catching hold of my arm, gazing upon me, he cry'd, "and does my Eliza live!"

I told him.

"What—and my little one— is ſhe "alive too!"

Yes ſir——they are both alive and well.

"Then, praiſed be God!—if they "are well, I ſhall yet be happy—but "where are they?"

Afraid

Afraid to affect him too much by letting him know they were in the houſe, I told him they were now on the road to town, and he ſhould have the pleaſure of beholding his wife and daughter very ſoon.

He at firſt ſeem'd reſolv'd to immediately meet them; but on my deſiring to know how the old gentleman his father did,—— "Sir (he "reply'd) he he is very bad—but "this news you bleſs me with will "revive his fainting ſpirits!" So ſaying, he turn'd into the room where the old gentleman lay. —— I in the mean while ſtaid in the cloſet, and could hear.

"Don't

" Don't flatter me! —— tis too
" much!—— No, my dear George!
" —— that happineſs I never can
" expect——tis too much!——yet
" if I could! —— But let me not
" think of it!——for that is the laſt
" happineſs the tendereſt parent can
" deſire——to bleſs his family and
" die!"

Here his ſon endeavour'd to ſolace him, and told him a gentleman in the next room had ſeen them lately, and that nothing would give them more happineſs than to have his bleſſing.

" Ay —— (reply'd the old man)
" —there's my miſery! — for when
" I

" I could have bleſs'd them, then I
" would not!——but now"———

" Forbear, ſir, theſe expreſſions—
" (return'd the young gentleman)
" —your affection for me and mine
" now certainly tranſcends all that
" is paſt."

Here they both ſeem to gaze at each other with reciprocal fondneſs, when the old gentleman exclaimed out,

" Oh, how could I ſteel my heart
" againſt ſuch filial love!——No—
" never—never can paternal regard
" expiate the wrongs I have done
" you, my dear George, your wife
" and child!——your child!———
" O, yes——'tis your's and mine——

" the

" the only bloſſom from this wither-
" ing trunk —— to uſe —— to uſe
" you thus !——— I cannot bear the
" thoughts of——'Tis too much——
" curs'd, damn'd deceiver !"

" Curſe her not, ſir—— let's hope
" ſhe may repent —at leaſt ſhe need
" have no one's curſe, as ſhe muſt
" ſtill bear about with her that great-
" eſt of all miſeries, a ſelf-condemn-
" ing conſcience."

" Ah ! George—but where is this
" gentleman ?"

As Mr. Wyndham came towards the cloſet, I approach'd him, who, leading me to the bed, reply'd—

" Here ſir."

" Sir,

"Sir (ſaid the old man, looking "at me) I thank you——thank you "in the moſt cordial manner for the "news of my dear George's wife and "child being well; and, when you "ſee them happily together — tell "her —— her father —— her cruel "father!—in his laſt breath, begg'd "her forgiveneſs, and would have "implored Heaven's pardon for his "barbarity to her, but that he fear-"ed his crimes were of too black a "die."

Mr. Wyndham and myſelf ſaid what we thought proper to conſole the repentant father, I adding I hoped in a very little time her preſence would conduce to his happi-

neſs,

neſs, and the recovery of his health—On hearing ſhe was ſo near, he ſaid, "Then I will riſe immediately;"—and, notwithſtanding his ſon's and my endeavours to the contrary, he would not be perſuaded——We accordingly rung for his ſervants, and leaving him to their care, retired to the adjacent room.

I begg'd Mr. Wyndham to excuſe me a minute or two, and I would return to him again;——then going down, I deſired Miſs Jones might be called out. She came, and I informed her of the joyful event, deſiring her to break it out to Mrs. Wyndham in the manner ſhe ſhould judge moſt proper (well knowing the ſofter

ſex

ſex more capable of ſoothing the extremes of grief and joy than we are) ſhe, with an heart undulating with rapture, undertook the happy taſk, and I return'd up ſtairs to Mr. Wyndham—— when entering into diſcourſe on the uncommonneſs of the adventure, and ſeeming deſirous to know what had happened to him after his leaving Mrs. Wyndham at Wilton, he began:

" Sir, the more you ſeem to en-
" quire after my affairs, the more I
" am convinc'd you muſt have heard
" the particulars previous to that un-
" happy parting from my deareſt
" Eliza herſelf.——

" The

" The unhappy morning I was
" decoyed from her at Wilton by
" a forged letter, I walk'd on thro'
" Saliſbury, and had got as far as
" the bridge, when I perceived a
" chaiſe driving very gently up the
" hill, and two men walk by its
" ſide; as I travelled much faſter
" than they, I ſoon overtook them,
" when the men parting as if to give
" me leave to paſs between them, each
" ſeiz'd an arm, and preſenting a
" piſtol ordered me to go in the
" chaiſe: as I knew reſiſtance
" would be vain againſt two
" wretches doubly arm'd, I pre-
" pared to obey their directions,
" when thinking I ſaw one of them,

" who

" who had opened the door, hold
" his piſtol rather careleſſly, I im-
" mediately ſeized it, and diſcharged
" it at the other, who was ſome
" paces behind. ——

" I believe the fluctuation my
" ſpirits were in, prevented my tak-
" ing proper aim — and I no ſooner
" heard the report, than I was fell'd
" to the ground; when I recovered
" from the ſtun, I perceived I was
" without my coat, and a ſort of
" a jacket put on in its room, cloſe
" before, with long ſleeves confining
" my arms croſs-ways to my ſides,
" and faſtened behind: on my de-
" manding furiouſly what was their
" intent? — they reply'd, madmen

" muſt be taken care of — that if I
" behaved myſelf compoſedly, I
" ſhould be treated with tenderneſs,
" but if, on the contrary, any fran-
" tic fits ſhould appear, they had
" their orders, and would obey
" them. ———

" I enquired, whither they were
" conducting me? ——— to a place
" of proper retirement for gentlemen
" in my unhappy diſorder, was
" their reply. ——

" As I knew they could not have
" taken this trouble to rob me (for
" who could attempt a poor in-
" ſolvent) and had not my deareſt
" life been preſent to my anxious
" thought, I ſhould have met what I
" imagin'd they intended (my death)

" with

" with joy;——but as I perceived
" they only anſwer'd me as one in-
" ſane, I forbore at preſent any
" farther inquiries, leaving myſelf
" entirely to Providence, and not
" doubting but in good time I
" ſhould be once more at liberty.

" We changed horſes three times,
" but as we always drove into the
" inn yards with the blind up, I ne-
" ver knew where we were; for, on
" my attempting any queſtion, one
" or other of the fellows always
" return'd, Poor gentleman!——
" don't anſwer——twill make him
" outrageous, and then it will be im-
" poſſible for his friends to ſee him
" well ſo ſoon as they could wiſh.

" In this ſtate of uncertainty night
" came on, and we at length left our
" carriage, and they inform'd me,
" after they had conducted me into a
" private room, that we were at
" Farnham, and the next day ſhould
" arrive at Mr. Rogers's at Hammer-
" ſmith, when their buſineſs was to
" terminate, and they hop'd I ſhould
" ſoon have repoſſeſſion of my reaſon,
" and be reſtored to my at pre-
" ſent unhappy family.

" The next morning, after a very
" tedious night, we again began our
" journey, and by duſk arriv'd at
" a large venerable-looking ancient
" edifice, the gates of the court of
" which,

" which, as ſoon as they had given
" us admiſſion, were again faſten'd.

" On our entrance into the hall,
" a grave-looking perſon accoſted
" us and enquired how I had be-
" hav'd. The ruffians anſwer'd——
" Very well ſince yeſterday, when
" they firſt took me; but then, as
" I diſcharg'd a piſtol at one of them,
" by which he narrowly eſcaped
" death, they had taken the pre-
" caution of the ſtrait waiſtcoat.

" He applauded their prudence,
" and deſired me with a ſupercilious
" complaiſance to walk in, where I
" ſhould be diſembarraſs'd from its
" incumberance, as he ſhould be
" very unhappy any gentleman un-

" der his care ſhould ſuffer any un-
" neceſſary confinement.

" I at firſt wonder'd what all
" this meant; but ſoon had reaſon
" to believe I was in a private mad-
" houſe, and indeed was confirm'd
" in my opinion by the behaviour
" of ſome of my fellow inhabitants.

" I was permitted at my requeſt
" to go to bed without eating, and
" likewiſe next morning, on ſay-
" ing I had no ſtomach, they did
" not preſs me to breakfaſt——but
" at dinner-time, when I continued
" my refuſal of eating, one of the
" attendants told me, if I did not
" I muſt take ſome medicine to cre-
" ate an appetite.

" I

" I desired him to be quiet —— " that I never would be prevailed " on to taste any thing in that house, " where I believed my death was " premeditated ——— that, though " death was my desire, yet as I " had a wife and little daughter, " who might want me, I never " would consent to swallow any " thing that might put a period " to my life.

" Here the ruffian stopp'd me, and " calling aloud--Dick !—another of " the same cast came in, and both " seizing me, tied my arms behind " me, and with an iron screw forced " open my mouth, and pouring a " nauseous draught down my throat,

" drove me from that apartment in-
" to one adjoining, where I was ex-
" cluded from all light, except what
" came from a narrow chaſm in the
" wall, which was left open to the
" weather, about three inches wide,
" and a foot long.——

" I continued in this infernal place,
" fubject to every ill treatment the
" moſt depraved mind can invent—
" for what but the moſt depraved
" mind can invent the yet latent cru-
" elties that are daily exerciſed on
" that part of the creation that ſhou'd
" be more immediately the pity—the
" concern of the reſt of mankind.—
" I mean thoſe to whom it has pleaſ-
" God to have taken from, what he

" has

" has thought proper to continue to
" others—their reaſon. —— But let
" me not intrude on your patience;
" I ſhall only ſay --who, at the rela-
" tion of theſe things, can refrain
" from tears?—and proceed to ac-
" quaint you, that on the ſecond day
" I was viſited by one who call'd him
" ſelf a phyſician, who hearing what
" they had done, approv'd the prac-
" tice and order'd it to be continued.

" The fifth day of my unhappy
" confinement, which was yeſterday,
" I was deſir'd to walk into Mr.
" Rogers's apartment, where an el-
" derly gentleman was introduced
" to me, who enquir'd particularly
" my name, &c.——Being ſatisfied

" in

" in every reſpect, both as to my
" family and my being in poſſeſſion
" of my ſenſes, he inform'd me his
" name was Jenkins——that he was
" in commiſſion of the peace for the
" county of Middleſex, and reſided
" at Chelſea—— that, about an hour
" before, a ſervant who formerly
" lived with him, and now was foot-
" man to Sir George Wyndham, had
" been with him, and given him in-
" formation——that going to look
" how the fire was in his lady's dreſ-
" ſing-room the night before, he had
" found a rough draught of a letter,
" which he thought ſeem'd to open
" a very iniquitous ſcene.—He made
" oath it was Lady Wyndham's hand,

" and

" and was likewiſe ſigned by her lady-
" ſhip.—It contain'd thanks to one Jef-
" ferys, for proſecuting the buſineſs
" with ſo much vigour---that, tho' the
" arreſt had failed, the other ſcheme
" had taken, and the firſt part was
" compleat---that young Wyndham
" was ſafe at Rogers's at Hammerſmith,
" and ſhe hoped he would ſoon put
" an end to the buſineſs, by ſecuring
" his wife and brat where they ſhould
" give her no more uneaſineſs---that
" Sir George had levied a fine, and
" ſuffer'd a recovery, on purpoſe
" to cut off the entail of his eſtate
" ——and the writings were ready
" to ſign, by which Sir George had
" given all he was worth, both real

" and

" and perſonal, in truſt to her uſe—
" that as ſoon as they were properly
" executed, and the other obſtacles
" removed, ſhe would, without far-
" ther delay, acknowledge him as
" her ſon.

" The man (continued the worthy
" magiſtrate) then gave me an ac-
" count of the family, and of ſome
" hardſhips and diſtreſſes they knew
" you had gone through by her arti-
" fices, and urged me ſo ſtrongly to
" enquire farther into this affair,
" that I could not reſiſt his impor-
" tunity, and am happy to find
" I have been hitherto ſo ſucceſſ-
" ful.

" Mr.

"Mr. Jenkins here ceaſed ——
"and I thanked him for his trouble,
"and deſired I might leave that
"diſmal houſe immediately—he ſaid
"he thought it might be better, if
"I could content myſelf a few hours
"longer there, and he made no
"doubt of bringing this affair to
"a happy iſſue.

"I then was proceeding to re-
"late to him the unhappy diſ-
"treſs my poor Eliza, and our dear
"child muſt be in—but he deſir-
"ing her addreſs, aſſured me he
"would immediately diſpatch an
"expreſs to them, and accommodate
"them as ſpeedily as poſt could
"travel to town ——— he then

"took

" and perſonal, in truſt to her uſe—
" that as ſoon as they were properly
" executed, and the other obſtacles
" removed, ſhe would, without far-
" ther delay, acknowledge him as
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"would immediately diſpatch an
"expreſs to them, and accommodate
"them as ſpeedily as poſt could
"travel to town —— he then

"took

" took his leave, and promis'd to
" return as ſoon as he poſſibly could
" perform what he hoped he ſhould,
" but as it was now towards the
" evening, I might not perhaps ſee
" him till the morning.

" As ſoon as he was gone I felt a
" dawn of reviving hope lighten my
" ſoul, I took ſome refreſhment, and
" was waited on, very officiouſly,
" by the miſcreants, who had ſo
" illuſed me before ——I thought it
" was beſt to ſhow no reſentment
" while I was under their roof — but
" now if I am not revenged for all
" their inſults on humanity in me,
" may I never behold Eliza more.

" I

"I ſtaid up till about eleven
"o'clock, and as I had not then
"heard any thing of Mr. Jenkins,
"I concluded I ſhould not till morn-
"ing, and went to bed—as I had had
"no reſt—for I believe I had never
"cloſed my eyes ſince the ruffians
"decoyed me from Wilton,——
"and I now, being ſomewhat eaſier
"in my mind, fell into a ſweet
"ſleep, and dreamt what you have
"given me hopes will be verify'd—
"I thought I ſaw my ſweet angel
"(hopeleſs, helpleſs, plung'd in deep
"deſpair) expiring in a pit of
"ſtagnate water, when a bright
"cloud open'd, and a perſon, whoſe
"preſence dazzled my ſight, came

"from

" from behind (whom I knew to be
" the guardian genius of the virtuous)
" who ſtretching his hand towards
" the pit, ſuddenly ſnatch'd my
" love from it to the ſweeteſt ver-
" dant ſpot I had ever ſeen, and de-
" livering her to a ſtranger, ſhe was
" conducted to me, ten thouſand
" times more lovely than I had ever
" beheld her before; when, as I was
" endeavouring to encircle her in
" my arms, and full of gratitude
" to thank the ſtranger—I awoke,
" and though I found it but a dream,
" it made

" My boſom's lord ſit lightly on his throne,

" from which I immediately preſaged
" ſome future good.

" About

" About ſix this morning one of
" the attendants came to my room,
" and told me a perſon waited for
" the honor of ſpeaking to me on
" extraordinary buſineſs.——I roſe
" and went down, and found it was
" the ſervant who had given Mr.
" Jenkins the information the day
" before.——He told me the worthy
" magiſtrate had called on Sir
" George about ſeven o'clock, but
" not finding him at home, enquired
" what time he would be, and was told
" he and his lady were at the play,
" whence they would not return till
" that and the entertainment were
" over.—About ten he called again,
" and as Sir George was not yet

" come home, ſaying he muſt ſee
" him that night, he was ſhewn
" into the parlour, and his ſervant
" into the kitchen—that about ele-
" ven Sir George came —— (who
" had left his lady at Almack's) ——
" and being inform'd a gentleman
" had waited ſome time for him, he
" went into the parlour to him ——
" where Mr. Jenkins deſired Sir
" George would permit this ſervant
" to ſtay.—— Sir George ſeem'd to
" wonder what this parade could
" mean—when Mr. Jenkins began
" with ——

" Sir George, you'll excuſe me
" —I am a ſtranger to you—I am in
" the

" the commiſſion of the peace for
" Middleſex and Weſtminſter."

" Well ſir (ſaid Sir George) is
" that material to me?"

" It is ſir, pleaſe to hear me."

" Go on ſir, if you pleaſe."

" You have a ſon, ſir?"

" I had ſir, once."

" Is he dead ſir?"

" No, no: I wiſh he was—he has
" been on the highway I judge, or
" ſome ſuch matter— but I'll not in-
" terfere —— juſtice ſhall take its
" courſe, and you may exert your
" magiſterial authority to its utmoſt
" ſtretch, without my attempting to
" interrupt it."

" Sir you are deceiv'd—he's much
" too good to attempt any thing in
" breach of thoſe laws the magi-
" ſtracy are appointed to guard."

" Sir, if that is your opinion your
" viſit here is vain—for I aſſure you,
" if he has not broke the public laws
" he has trampled on the private
" ones of domeſtic ſociety, which
" ſhould be undoubtedly kept as in-
" violate as thoſe which concern
" mankind in general."

" Undoubtedly, ſir!——but may
" you not be miſinformed?——may
" he not be traduced and vilified by
" the mouth of calumny, envious of
" ſuperior worth?"

" No

"No, ſir, I am ſo well convinc'd
"of his baſeneſs---of his treachery
"in my own family---and of his
"endeavours to ſow diſcord be-
"tween my lady and me——that
"as I have often ſaid, and now re-
"peat, I would not give one far-
"thing to keep him from the
"gallows."

"Sir; let me intreat you, be not
"too haſty?"

"I am not, ſir------I am ſeldom
"haſty in making any reſolution;
"but when I have made one, I keep
"it."

"Is Lady Wyndham at home?"

"No, ſir."

"Will it be long before ſhe comes "in?"

"I cannot tell, ſir.——You ſeem "very inquiſitive."

"I have buſineſs of importance.— "Will you permit me to ſtay till "ſhe does come?——I ſhall eſteem "it an honor."

"I can have no objection to any "gentleman's ſtaying in my houſe, "who deſires to ſpeak to Lady "Wyndham——and if you will for- "bear *that* hated name, I ſhall be "extremely glad with your com- "pany. As it may be ſome time "before ſhe comes, What ſay you

"to

" to a game at chefs, to amuſe us in
" the interim?"

" With all my heart, ſir."

" Here the tables were brought
" in, and the ſervant told to with-
" draw.

" In about an hour's time, Lady
" Wyndham arriv'd, and Sir George
" inform'd her Mr. Jenkins had
" ſome earneſt buſineſs with her,
" and had waited a long time to ſee
" her.

" She deſired, with an affected air,
" to know it as ſoon as he pleas'd,
" as ſhe had danc'd all night with
" the Marquis de Belville, and was
" exceſſively fatigued.

" Madam, (Mr. Jenkins began) " my buſineſs concerns young Mr. " Wyndham."

" Then, ſir, it concerns not me."

" It does, madam!"

" How, ſir?"

" Where is he, madam?"

" How ſhould I know?"

" You do, madam, too well—— " too well you know he is in a mad- " houſe, confin'd there, though in " his perfect ſenſes, through your " artifices."

" Mr. Jenkins expreſſing the laſt " ſentence in a diſtinct tone, and fix- " ing his eyes firmly on her as he " ſpoke, ſhe ſeemed a little confus'd

" —— but

" —— but ſuddenly recollecting
" herſelf, ſhe turn'd to Sir George
" with, ——

" Excuſe me, dear Sir George,
" this one act of diſobedience, to
" which my love for you prompted
" me.—I heard the poor young man
" was wandring frantic about the
" country, and ſwearing he would
" extirpate you and all the family:
" and being fearful he would find
" means to put his mad deſigns in
" execution, took the precaution to
" have him convey'd to the houſe of
" a phyſician; and as ſoon as he
" had been reſtored to his ſenſes, I
" ſhould have done my endeavours
" once more to reconcile you to him,

" not-

" notwithſtanding you have ſo often
" forbid my interceeding again for
" him."

" There, ſir, ſaid Sir George---I
" told you I need not go out of
" my own family for proofs of his
" villainy——and was I to relate the
" iniquitous ſchemes he has invent-
" ed againſt Lady Wyndham and
" myſelf, you would wonder he had
" not been long before now in a
" priſon inſtead of a mad-houſe —
" and yet I am certain I do not know
" one half of them, as my lady has
" ever been careful to keep them
" from me; and thoſe I have been
" acquainted with, have been diſ-
" covered as this freſh proof of her
" affection

" affection and care has —— acci-
" dentally."

" Lady Wyndham at this reco-
" vered her ſpirits, and went on to
" Mr. Jenkins——and if this be all
" the buſineſs you have with me ſir,
" your ſervant."

" Stay, madam ——I charge you
" ſtay — you muſt — I am a magi-
" ſtrate —— I have had information
" upon oath of your deſigns againſt
" Mr. George Wyndham, his wife
" and daughter——I have granted a
" warrant upon that information,
" and there is a peace officer now in
" this houſe, in the character of my
" ſervant, ready to execute it upon
" my call——therefore madam, as

" you

" you value your reputation, hear
" me calmly."

" Lady Wyndham, whoſe tears
" were always at command, and
" who had oſten experienc'd their
" efficacy on Sir George, had now
" recourſe to them, and ſobb'd out
" —— Will Sir George Wyndham
" ſuffer his lady to be thus treated by
" a pitiful fellow — a Weſtminſter
" juſtice?"

" Stop my dear (reply'd the Ba-
" ronet) tho' I know your inno-
" cence, yet, as the gentleman has
" been impoſed on by ſome of the
" villain's colleagues, he proceeds
" with that candour and caution,
" tho' regularly in the affair, that

" does

" does more honour to the commiſ-
" ſion he is intruſted with, than any
" improper perſon who may have
" been joined in the ſame could ever
" do injury to it."

" Mr. Jenkins thank'd Sir George
" for his compliment, and Lady
" Wyndham defy'd him to prove
" what he had aſſerted.——

" As to proof, madam, it does not
" belong to me now——I can only
" make enquiry into any affair con-
" cerning which I receive informa-
" tion, and proceed, according to the
" beſt of my knowledge, judicially
" thereon.——But waving this diſ-
" courſe—do you, my lady, know
" one Mr. Jefferys?"

" A fellow with ſuch a name de-
" luded and ran away with my
" daughter, but poor girl ſhe has
" ſufficiently ſuffer'd for her indiſ-
" cretion, and if I knew where ſhe
" was I would relieve her."

" Not, I believe madam, till Mr.
" Wyndham's lady and child are
" diſpos'd to your ſatisfaction.——
" Sir George pleaſe to peruſe this
" (added Mr. Jenkins, preſenting
" the letter the ſervant had given
" him to Sir George)."

" Peruſe what? (ſaid Lady Wynd-
" ham, furiouſly, endeavouring to
" catch it from him)."

" Sir

" Sir George ſtopp'd her, ſaid he " was ſurpriz'd at her behaviour, " and would look over it.

" Lady Wyndham, conſcious of " her own guilt, or ſurpriz'd at Sir " George's ſteady behaviour (to which " the preſence of Mr. Jenkins contri- " buted) immediately on his taking " the paper in his hand, her uſual " preſence of mind ſeem'd to leave " her, and ſhe had much ado to con- " ceal her fury.

" Sir George haſtily run over the " contents, and deſired Mr. Jenkins " to inform him how he became " poſſeſt of that black ſcrowl.

" Being

"Being told by Mr. Jenkins, the "ſervant had given it him, with the "information on oath"——

"And where did you get it Tho- "mas? ſaid Sir George."

"I had it in my lady's dreſſing- "room."——

"Lady Wyndham (whoſe cunning "had not yet quite forſaken her) "interrupted the ſervant, and ad- "dreſſing herſelf to Sir George—— "You cannot have forgotten the for- "gery your ſon and Harris were "concern'd in formerly, and can "you think him leſs artful now?— "if he could influence one ſervant to "betray his truſt, may he not bribe "another?—— Can any one ima-

"gine,

" gine, if I were baſe enough to write
" that letter, I could be ſo weak to
" leave it expoſed to the prying cu-
" rioſity of impertinent ſervants ?"

" Hold, madam (ſaid Sir George)
" already I know too much —— too
" much by far——for my peace of
" mind —— that forgery you men-
" tion I well remember, and thought
" poor George the author. —— But
" this letter —— how could he forge
" it, or with what bribe my ſervants
" when you ſay he has been wander-
" ing round the country—and you to
" prevent miſchief, have confined
" him ?——How could he know the
" name of Jefferys ? — or how could
" any one but yourſelf write an ac-

" count of the deeds being ready to
" execute, by which I ſhould make
" over my eſtate to your uſe, when
" you, and your acquaintance the at-
" torney, are the only perſons who
" know any thing about it?—— too
" well——too late —am I convinced
" — what I thought paſt conception
" that female ſoftneſs could ever be
" guilty of ſuch complicated wick-
" edneſs—go inſtantly traitreſs from
" my ſight!——be gone!——your
" preſence may urge me to ſome
" raſh deed I would not for the
" world commit.——Oh, my poor
" boy! (continued Sir George) —
" then ſtamping, cry'd, take the
" viper hence!—attempt not your
" juſ-

" juſtification! —— how—how have
" I been duped by a vile woman!—
" and immediately threw himſelf on
" the ground.

" Lady Wyndham, finding Sir
" George convicted of her iniquity
" beyond a poſſibility of doubt by
" the letter, no longer endeavour'd
" to conceal her ſhame, but riſing
" from paſſion to madneſs, curs'd
" Sir George, Mr. Wyndham, her-
" ſelf, and all the world—damn'd the
" ſervant and Mr. Jenkins for buſy
" meddling fools, and wiſh'd ano-
" ther week had paſs'd before her
" ſchemes had been diſcover'd, when
" ſhe ſwore they ſhould not have
" proved abortive —— then with a

" horrid imprecation left the room,
" and order'd a hackney-coach to
" be called from Piccadilly, into
" which ſhe got, and drove away
" without any one's attempting to
" ſtop her or go with her, as by this
" time Sir George's ſervants were
" all buſied in attending their ſick
" maſter.

" The various and contending paſ-
" ſions in Sir George's breaſt over-
" came him to that degree he was
" ſcarce ſenſible, till about an hour
" before the ſervant had inform'd
" me of theſe particulars, when he
" calmly, tho' preſſingly, intreated
" Mr. Jenkins to accompany him to
" Hammerſmith— who agreeing to

" his

" his requeſt, they had ſent the ſer-
" vant before to acquaint me with
" their arrival.

" As ſoon as he had related this
" account I heard ſome people
" coming towards the room where
" we were, and diſcover'd, on open-
" ing the door, Sir George leaning
" on Mr. Jenkins's arm, and very
" ſlowly advancing towards me.

" The ſenſibility I felt at the ap-
" proach of my father is paſt expreſ-
" ſion, tho' I was greatly ſhock'd to
" ſee him ſo much alter'd ſince I had
" laſt beheld him.

" The meeting between Sir George
" and me was very intereſting; but
" as it was nearly the ſame with that

" you have juſt beheld, I need not
" repeat it, and ſhall only add—Mr.
" Jenkins left us together, and my
" father inſiſting on our proceeding
" immediately weſtward, in hopes of
" having ſome earlier tidings of my
" dear Eliza than the meſſengers
" could bring to town, we have tra-
" velled thus far, but Sir George
" growing worſe, we were here
" forced to ſtop on his account, but
" I hope he ſoon will be able ——"

Here he was interrupted by ſome-body on the ſtairs crying—" where " is he!— where is my life!"—when Mr. Wyndham, burſting the door, cry'd out—" Oh God, 'tis ſhe! 'tis " my Eliza's voice!"—and catching

his

his wife in his arms, as if in doubt, enquired—"Does my Eliza live! "can I be ſo bleſt!"

She had only power to ſay, while ſhe hung on his neck—"My Wynd- "ham, once more do I embrace! "do I live once more to ſee my dear "—my much-lov'd huſband!"—and ſunk into that inſenſibility to which the immoderate or immediate poſ- ſeſſion of grief or joy can inſtantly convey us.

Fortunately for the amiable couple I ſtood behind Mr. Wyndham, and aſſiſted him in ſupporting his wife, till Miſs Jones (who had follow'd Mrs. Wyndham with Emily) reach'd a chair, in which he ſat down, and his

his wife (who ſtill was lock'd in his embrace) reclin'd on his boſom.

The old gentleman came preſently ſtaggering from his bed-room, and obſerving their ſituation and his daughter's now-returning life, falling on his knees by their ſide, held up his wither'd hands and cry'd,——

"Curſe me, my dear children—— "curſe me, as the author of your "miſery! —— tis what I deſerve, "and 'twill eaſe ſomewhat of the "weight of woe I labour under."

Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, who was by this time recover'd ſufficiently to know it was Sir George, dropping likewiſe on their knees,—

"Bleſs

"Bleſs us, dear Sir George —— "bleſs your now happy children," was utter'd by both at once, and faintly echo'd by the little Emily, who had join'd the kneeling group and wept by ſympathy.

As I had rather too much of the "milk of human kindneſs" to ſtand this ſcene, I left them till my ſpirits ſhould be recover'd, and went down ſtairs.

As ſoon as I enter'd the kitchen, I found Johnſon, who had been inform'd of the happy meeting, danc- a hornpipe on the dreſſer, and ſhouting like a madman, having in his exceſs of rapture broke the landlord's

head,

head, becauſe, as he ſaid, his damn'd diſmal countenance expreſs'd no ſign of pleaſure on ſo joyful an occaſion.

As I thought Mrs. Wyndham would have occaſion for Miſs Jones's aſſiſtance, and I choſe to accompany them to town, I told the coachman, who was impatient to be gone, we ſhould proceed no farther with him, and therefore would not detain him any longer.——Johnſon added, he'd be damn'd if he did not ſtay too; ſo the coachman might weigh anchor immediately as the wind was fair, for he'd lay by and give Mr. Wyndham three cheers for the honour of Old England, ſwearing he long'd

to

to ſalute him, and would jump maſt-high at any time for the ſight of ſo worthy a fellow.

I was ſo pleas'd at the brave tarr's unpoliſh'd ſenſibility and rough humanity, I could not reſiſt his motion of drinking a health to the company aloft, as he expreſt it, in a half-pint bumper; and on my declining a ſecond, he ſwore he'd finiſh the bottle.

I now return'd up ſtairs, and found every face more compos'd than when I left them.

Mr. Wyndham mention'd ſomething about their conveyance to town, and Sir George declaring himſelf able to travel, I propos'd a poſt-coach

coach for Sir George, Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, Miſs Jones and Emily, and I would do myſelf the honour to attend them in Sir George's chaiſe.

This propoſal being approv'd, the ſervants were ſent to ſee the horſes put too; and while that was doing, we thought a room on the ground-floor would be more pleaſant than the cloſet we were now in, and accordingly deſcended to one even with the bar; croſſing the yard to which, we were met by Johnſon, who had been as good as his word, and with what he had drank before was tolerably drunk—who reeling up to Mr. Wyndham, ſlapp'd him on the ſhoulders, catch'd faſt hold of his

his hand with a gripe, and look'd for a moment ſtedfaſtly in his face, then cry'd——"What cheer brother?—"damn me but ye'are a glorious fel-"low!——and Sir Cloudſley's birth-"day meſs be the everlaſting portion "of thoſe that wiſh you otherwiſe "than well!"

Mr. Wyndham, not being uſed to ſuch a ſalute, puſh'd him roughly from him, but on my acquainting him, as well as I knew, who he was, and how he came thus in liquor —— he ſmiled, ſhook hands with him, and thanked him for his compliment;--- for though he did not underſtand one word of it, he took it (now) as ſuch, which ſo pleas'd Johnſon, that he im-

mediately

mediately left us, and went hallowing whooping and jumping round the yard.

In about a quarter of an hour Johnſon came dancing into the room, and ſwore we muſt all embark directly, for he had ſeen the laſt larbord wheel tarr'd, and as the coach was ready for the voyage, he himſelf would be our convoy to the port of London.

We ſoon underſtood what the honeſt lieutenant meant, and in about three hours, were ſet down in Albemarle-ſtreet, where Johnſon, getting out of the chaiſe, ſwore heartily that he never was ſo happy in his life before, no not in any engagement he had

had ever been in (though he had ſeen many a warm one, and been yard-arm and yard-arm at it for three glaſſes together) as he was at making this harbour——but, as he was engag'd that night at the Britannia, at Union-ſtairs, he could not ſtay any longer than to wiſh the crew well, and himſelf a freſh gale to Wapping.

So ſaying, away he went toward St. James's, and I having drank a glaſs of wine, left the happy pair, &c. in their father's houſe. And, leſt you ſhould be inquiſitive after their future welfare, I cannot help giving you the following

Con-

Concluding Note.

AS I could not for ſome time (buſineſs intervening) call in Albemarle-ſtreet, when I did myſelf that pleaſure —— I found Mrs. Wyndham recover'd; the roſeate bloom had again carnation'd her moſt lovely cheeks, and her ſweet blue eyes beam'd with redoubled ſweetneſs.——

Sir George, by the aſſiduous care and tender reſpect ſhewn him by his children, had overcome the diſtreſſes of his mind, and was the counter part of what he had been.——

Miſs

Miſs Jones, who came to London with a recommendation for a little place at court, chuſing rather to continue as companion to Mrs. Wyndham, was in that ſituation, and Sir George had ſettled an annuity on her for life.———

Harris had left Sir Edward Goringe, and was married to Mrs. Fletcher, and they had both retir'd to Beauchamp-grove, where he was ſteward for Sir George.———

Lord Melford's repentance was ſincere, and he had emerg'd from a life of folly to that of a truly noble Britiſh peer.———

Mr. Wyndham had preſented the Gaolor with a very valuable ring.——

The Two Brothers, who reſcu'd Mrs. Wyndham from Jefferys, had received two hundred pounds as a preſent from Mr. Wyndham, and now rented a very good farm, at an eaſy rent, belonging to Sir George.——

Jefferys and his wife, endeavouring to eſcape juſtice, had got on board a ſmuggling cutter at Weymouth, and were overſet off Portland, crowding too much ſail.—— And

Lady

Lady Wyndham, by her evil actions, was actually deprived of her ſenſes, and confined in the ſame houſe, where ſhe had ſo wrongfully impriſon'd Mr. Wyndham.

THE END.

ERRATA.

P. 21. V. I. l. 4. *for* Mrs. Wyndham *r.* Madam
70. —— l. 8, *for* ſpirit *read* ſpeech
75. —— l. 5. *for* Mrs. *read* Mr.
79. —— l. 5. *dele* her
79. —— l. 8. *for* ſtrewed *read* ſcatter'd.